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PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES.

FIRST SESSION, 1920.

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EIGHTH PARLIAMENT.

FIRST SESSION.

Governor-General.*

His Excellency the Right Honorable HENRY WILLIAM, BARON FORSTER, a Member of His Majesty's Most Honorable Privy Council, Knight Grand Cross of the Most Distinguished Order of Saint Michael and Saint George, and Commander-in-Chief in and over the Commonwealth of Australia.

* From 6th October, 1920.

Australian National Government.

(From 10th January, 1918.)

Prime Minister and Attorney-General	..	The Right Honorable William Morris Hughes, P.C., K.C.
Minister for the Navy	..	The Right Honorable Sir Joseph Cook, P.C., G.C.M.G.
		<i>Succeeded by</i>
		The Honorable W. H. Laird Smith (28th July, 1920).
Treasurer	..	The Right Honorable Lord Forrest, P.C., G.C.M.G.
		<i>Succeeded by</i>
		The Right Honorable William Alexander Watt, P.C. (27th March, 1918).†††
		<i>Succeeded by</i>
		The Right Honorable Sir Joseph Cook, P.C., G.C.M.G. (28th July, 1920).
Minister for Defence	..	The Honorable George Foster Pearce.
Minister for Repatriation	..	The Honorable Edward Davis Millen.
Minister for Works and Railways	..	The Right Honorable William Alexander Watt, P.C.
		<i>Succeeded by</i>
		The Honorable Littleton Ernest Groom (27th March, 1918).
Minister for Home and Territories	..	The Honorable Patrick McMahon Glynn, K.C.†††
		<i>Succeeded by</i>
		The Honorable Alexander Poynton, O.B.E. (4th February, 1920).
Minister for Trade and Customs	..	The Honorable Jens August Jensen.†
		<i>Succeeded by</i>
		The Right Honorable William Alexander Watt, P.C. (13th December, 1918).
		<i>Succeeded by</i>
		The Honorable Walter Massy Greene (17th January, 1919).
Postmaster-General	..	The Honorable William Webster.†††
		<i>Succeeded by</i>
		The Honorable George Henry Wise (4th February, 1920).
Vice-President of the Executive Council	..	The Honorable Littleton Ernest Groom.
		<i>Succeeded by</i>
		The Honorable Edward John Russell (27th March, 1918).
Honorary Minister	..	The Honorable Edward John Russell.
		Appointed Vice-President of the Executive Council, 27th March, 1918.
Honorary Minister	..	The Honorable Alexander Poynton.
		Appointed Minister for Home and Territories, 4th February, 1920.
Honorary Minister	..	The Honorable George Henry Wise.
		Appointed Postmaster-General, 4th February, 1920.
Honorary Minister	..	The Honorable Walter Massy Greene.
		Appointed Minister for Trade and Customs, 17th January, 1919.*
Honorary Minister	..	The Honorable Richard Beaumont Orchard.**
Honorary Minister	..	The Honorable Sir Granville de Laune Ryrie, K.C.M.G., C.B., V.D.††
Honorary Minister	..	The Honorable William Henry Laird Smith.††
		Appointed Minister for the Navy, 28th July, 1920.
Honorary Minister	..	The Honorable Arthur Stanislaus Rodgers.***

* Appointed 26th March, 1918.—† Removed from office, 13th December, 1918.—** Resigned office, 31st January, 1919.—†† Appointed 4th February, 1920.—††† Resigned 3rd February, 1920.—†††† Resignation from office gazetted, 15th June, 1920.—*** Appointed 28th July, 1920.

Senators.

(From 1st July, 1920.)

President—Senator the Honorable Thomas Givens.

Chairman of Committees—Senator Thomas Jerome Kingston Bakhap.

* Adamson, John, C.B.E. (Q.)	* Glasgow, Sir Thomas William, K.C.B., C.M.G., D.S.O. (Q.)
Bakhap, Thomas Jerome Kingston (T.)	
* Benny, Benjamin (S.A.)	* Guthrie, James Francis (V.)
Bolton, William Kinsey, C.B.E., V.D. (V.)	Guthrie, Robert Storrie (S.A.)
² Buzacott, Richard (W.A.)	Henderson, George (W.A.)
* Cox, Charles Frederick, C.B., C.M.G. (N.S.W.)	Keating, Hon. John Henry (T.)
Crawford, Thomas William (Q.)	* Lynch, Patrick Joseph (W.A.)
De Largie, Hon. Hugh (W.A.)	Millen, Hon. Edward Davis (N.S.W.)
* Drake-Brockman, Edmund Alfred, C.B., C.M.G., D.S.O. (W.A.)	* Millen, John Dunlop (T.)
* Duncan, Walter Leslie (N.S.W.)	* ¹ Newland, John, C.B.E. (S.A.)
Earle, Hon. John (T.)	* Payne, Hon. Herbert James Mockford (T.)
* Elliott, Harold Edward, C.B., C.M.G., D.S.O., D.C.M. (V.)	² Pearce, Hon. George Foster (W.A.)
Fairbairn, George (V.)	¹ Plain, William (V.)
Foll, Hattil Spencer (Q.)	Pratten, Herbert Edward (N.S.W.)
² Foster, George Matthew (T.)	Reid, Matthew (Q.)
* Gardiner, Albert (N.S.W.)	¹ Rowell, James, C.B. (S.A.)
* Givens, Hon. Thomas (Q.)	* Russell, Hon. Edward John (V.)
	Senior, William (S.A.)
	Thomas, Hon. Josiah (N.S.W.)
	* Wilson, Reginald Victor (S.A.)

1. Appointed Temporary Chairman of Committees, 21st July, 1920. 2. Elected 13th December, 1919. Sworn 21st July, 1920. 3. Appointed Temporary Chairman of Committees, 26th February, 1920. * Elected 13th December, 1919. Sworn 1st July, 1920.

House of Representatives.

Friday, 22 October, 1920.

MR. SPEAKER (Hon. Sir Elliot Johnson) took the chair at 11 a.m., and read prayers.

MOTION OF CENSURE.

Debate resumed from 21st October (*vide* page 5900), on motion by Mr. TUDOR—

That the Government be censured for their failure to make provision for the payment of 5s. per bushel cash at railway sidings for this season's wheat.

MR. RODGERS (Wannon—Assistant Minister for Repatriation) [11.2].—When the House adjourned last night, I was reminding honorable members of the financial magnitude of the Commonwealth and State guarantees respecting the coming wheat harvest. I pointed out that in New South Wales the guarantees aggregated 8s. 2d. per bushel. It must not be forgotten that in addition to the amount guaranteed for the coming harvest, there is to be paid before the termination of the present year dividends on past Pools, totalling approximately £1,830,000. The Prime Minister's statement yesterday showed conclusively that the Commonwealth Government is prepared to use its financial resources and those of the banks to the greatest extent possible. In addition, it is placing at the service of the wheat-growers the Commonwealth line of steamers, which was a most potent factor in the completion of the sale of wheat already made, and this sale, I venture to predict, will be found to be the most advantageous that will be made during the present harvest. There is abundant evidence that the Government is determined to honour the guarantee that has been given. Although not in the first instance a party to the creation of this year's Pool, the Prime Minister, in fulfilment of a promise that he gave, is doing everything that is reasonably possible to make the Pool a success. I would, however, draw the attention of the House and of the farming community to the fact that in the immediate

future the strain upon the financial resources of the Commonwealth will be very great. A very large sum of money will be needed to finance part of the wool clip which will not be readily saleable, and other money will be needed to finance the stock transactions of the men on the land, which are of great magnitude, and to carry on the other enterprises of the country. If we were to devote the whole of our financial resources to one branch of industry alone, we should be straining them too much in one direction. The wheat-growers have abundant evidence that this Government will not only give effect to its own promises, but will also render all possible assistance to make the Wheat Pool a success.

I think that on reflection the honorable member for Hume (Mr. Parker Moloney) will regard his interpretation of the guarantee as an absurd one. Yesterday the most accredited wheat farmer in Victoria, the honorable member for Echuca (Mr. Hill) who is the representative here of a farming constituency, and is the wheat growers' representative on the Australian Wheat Board, gave his interpretation of the Prime Minister's promise.

MR. PARKER MOLONEY.—Do you not think that the Prime Minister pooled the honorable member for Echuca?

MR. RODGERS.—The utterances of the honorable member in this Chamber and elsewhere prove clearly that he cannot be charged, to use his own words, with holding a brief for the Prime Minister. On the other hand, we have the interpretation of the honorable member for Wimmera (Mr. Stewart).

MR. STEWART.—I gave what is the interpretation placed upon the promise by nine out of ten of the farmers in my constituency.

MR. RODGERS.—I have not heard that a vote has been taken to ascertain the views of those farmers so accurately. The pressure for the payment of the maximum dividend is chiefly from New South Wales, which is easily to be understood, because last year there was a complete failure of crops in that State over 1,250,000 acres.

MR. STEWART.—They are getting an extra 2s. 6d.

Mr. RODGERS.—Yes; but what can be paid will depend on the financial position. I foresee difficulties in the way of the New South Wales Government paying immediately that 2s. 6d., which, on the estimated 40,000,000 bushel crop, would mean an advance of £5,000,000.

Mr. STEWART.—The New South Wales Government has not repudiated its promise.

Mr. RODGERS.—I do not suggest that; but in the end it will be seen that the Commonwealth Government must materially assist in the payment of that 2s. 6d. The first charge on the wheat in the Pool will be a banker's charge in respect of the first payment of 5s., and the New South Wales Government will have to finance on its equity in the wheat. It is easy to ask for the immediate payment of obligations; but, as I pointed out last night, on a 130,000,000-bushel crop, after deducting 15,000,000 bushels for seed and fowl food, and other uses, the amount required would be £32,000,000. In addition, there would be 8d. per bushel for freight and handling and administrative charges, which would aggregate £4,333,000. Then a further advance of 2s. 6d. per bushel on the New South Wales 40,000,000-bushel crop, would bring the whole outlay to about £41,000,000. That is a staggering amount, in view of the fact that we need money to keep all our industries going. Were shipping available to carry away the wheat, there would soon be money to pay for it; but honorable members know that although there has been a very satisfactory sale, we should like to see the harvest sold at a much more rapid rate. The farmers owe to the Prime Minister the success of the transaction that has already been completed, because it was due to the pertinacity with which he pressed the sale, and to the effort he made to obtain the shipping necessary to carry away the wheat. It is difficult, however, to say how, within the next few months, £41,000,000 can be found for wheat advances, if, at the same time, sufficient money is to be available for the financing of our other industries, to which I have just alluded. Attention has been drawn to the fact that restrictions have been placed on overseas trading such as have not been experienced before, which make the task of our financial institutions tremendously difficult. Under these circum-

stances the farmers would be unwise to press for the stretching of finance in their favour to a dangerous extent.

Mr. STEWART.—Directly the £41,000,000 is paid to the farmers, it will flow through the ordinary channels of trade.

Mr. RODGERS.—I wish I could think that after the money had been paid to the wheat farmers, it would be immediately available for the financing of wool and other transactions. I do not think that it would.

Mr. STEWART.—The money will not stay in the pockets of the wheat-growers.

Mr. RODGERS.—That is so. But any one acquainted with finance knows that we cannot to-day undertake commitments involving £41,000,000, and then enter into other engagements on the assumption that that money will be available within the course of a few weeks. Therefore, I ask the representatives of the farmers not to press too strongly for the immediate payment of the full amount guaranteed. The Prime Minister showed yesterday that he is determined to make available to the farmers as large a sum as possible. A Conference of those who will have to shoulder great financial burdens in connexion with this matter will be held on Wednesday next, and to commit the Commonwealth and the other parties to that Conference to definite figures in advance would, in my judgment, be a most unbusiness-like procedure. In view of all the circumstances, I ask the producers of this country to rely upon the undertaking of the Government, which will be honorably fulfilled.

Mr. GREGORY (Dampier) [11.16].—The motion which has been submitted by the Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Tudor), affirming that the Government should be censured for their failure to make provision for the payment of the wheat guarantee, seems to me somewhat premature. A considerable time must elapse before next season's grain can be harvested, and I have not hitherto observed any great anxiety on the part of honorable members opposite to expedite the fulfilment of the Commonwealth's undertaking.

Mr. GABB.—Then the honorable member has not read the notice-paper.

Mr. GREGORY.—The honorable member for New England (Mr. Hay) has repeatedly asked questions of the Prime

Minister, urging that early consideration should be given to this matter, but very little sympathy with him has been exhibited by members of the Opposition. Consequently, I am driven to conclude, as the Prime Minister has done, that this motion was merely a political dodge with a view to influencing the electors.

Mr. PARKER MOLONEY.—Is the honorable member going to help the Government out of their difficulty again?

Mr. GREGORY.—I intend to submit an amendment.

Mr. PARKER MOLONEY.—I thought so.

Mr. GREGORY.—I do not think that the honorable member will like it.

Mr. PARKER MOLONEY.—I knew that the Government would use the honorable member.

Mr. GREGORY.—I shall take very good care that the honorable member does not use me.

Mr. SPEAKER (Hon. Sir Elliot Johnson).—Order! Will the honorable member for Hume cease interjecting?

Mr. GREGORY.—The honorable member will be very dissatisfied when I read my amendment, and I am sure that he will find it exceedingly difficult to vote against it.

Mr. PARKER MOLONEY.—The honorable member always gets the Government out of a difficulty. He will not hear the division bells when they ring.

Mr. GREGORY.—When the Budget was under consideration in this Chamber, honorable members opposite did not complain of the arrangement which had been made regarding this matter. They were all fairly content, and but for the motion which has been submitted by their Leader, they would have been quite satisfied with the explanation which was given by the Prime Minister yesterday.

Mr. TUDOR.—There would have been no explanation had I not moved this motion.

Mr. HUGHES.—There would have been no explanation? Why the Conference was arranged long before ever I heard of the honorable member's motion.

Mr. GREGORY.—However, the motion having been brought forward, honorable members are now afforded an opportunity of impressing upon the Government the need which exists for assisting the farmers financially in connexion with the approaching wheat crop. When one considers the seasons which have

recently been experienced in New South Wales, one is bound to admit that the farmers there have been subjected to a very severe gruelling.

Mr. STEWART.—And in Victoria, too.

Mr. GREGORY.—The position is not so bad in Victoria, but in New South Wales the farmers have experienced a most disastrous time. The Government having given a guarantee in connexion with the forthcoming harvest, and having thus induced an enormous area to be put under crop, every effort should be made to provide cash assistance for those who will garner this year's grain. Recognising the difficult position that is occupied by many of our farmers, I am satisfied that not only the Prime Minister, but the Governments of all the wheat producing States, will do everything that is possible to enable a substantial cash deposit to be paid when the wheat is delivered at our railway sidings. Before resuming my seat I intend to move an amendment to make the motion read—

That the Government, having guaranteed the producer 5s. per bushel at sidings for this season's wheat, should arrange for payment of same on delivery by cash and certificates, such certificates to be repayable in such instalments and at such periods as are recommended by the Central Wheat Board, and that in the opinion of this House nothing should be done to prevent the producer receiving the export parity for all wheat, including wheat for home consumption.

Mr. BRENNAN.—That is a squib.

Mr. GREGORY.—In connexion with the first portion of my amendment—

Mr. JAMES PAGE.—I am sorry that it is like the Farmers party—a dud.

Mr. PARKER MOLONEY.—Is this amendment the result of an all-night sitting? I am afraid that the honorable member will be absent again when the division bells ring.

Mr. SPEAKER.—Order!

Mr. PARKER MOLONEY.—The honorable member for Dampier looks quite weary.

Mr. SPEAKER.—Order!

Mr. GREGORY.—I quite recognise that honorable members opposite occupy an embarrassing position. But after the strain which has been put upon our financial institutions by our huge war loans—

Mr. CUNNINGHAM.—The amendment provides the Government with a three-chain road upon which to get away.

Mr. SPEAKER.—Order! I must ask honorable members to restrain their impetuosity.

Mr. TUDOR.—In the circumstances it is very difficult to do so.

Mr. SPEAKER.—It seems rather strange that almost every Friday morning we have exhibitions of this kind. I do not know whether it is the result of the strain of the week's sittings. But honorable members must see that it is extremely difficult for the honorable member for Dampier to get in a single sentence without other honorable members interjecting; often in chorus. I must ask honorable members to desist from that practice.

Mr. GREGORY. — The large sums which have been taken from our financial institutions in connexion with our war loans, and the possibility which exists of further large sums being required from them, will make it very difficult for the Commonwealth to finance the wheat guarantee, particularly when we take into consideration the bumper harvest for the coming year. If our farmers were going to reap a very moderate or a poor harvest, it would not be difficult for the Commonwealth to make similar financial provision to that which it made last year. But the different conditions which obtain this year will render that impossible. I am sure that the Prime Minister will do all that he can to make available in cash, by way of deposit, the largest sum possible when this wheat is delivered. I desire that the wheat certificate issued shall be somewhat different from the ordinary wheat certificate; in fact, a Commonwealth security or bond which the producer can take to his bank, and upon which he can obtain an advance up to the 5s. guarantee, should that course be found necessary. This is the only point in connexion with the amendment upon which we are at variance with the Government themselves. If the Prime Minister can accept my amendment, I hope that he will be able to assure us that the certificate which will be issued will be a negotiable asset. The Commonwealth having guaranteed the payment of 5s. per bushel, that amount should be payable at such times and in such amounts as the Central Wheat Board may recommend. Upon that Board, the Common-

wealth, the States, and the producers will be represented. Its members will know how the wheat is being sold, and how the cash is coming in, and they will be able to make their recommendations to the Government accordingly. Personally, I am hopeful that within the short period of three months from the opening of the harvest the total advance of 5s. per bushel will have been paid to the farmers. We know that past Wheat Pools have not been administered so satisfactorily as the Assistant Minister (Mr. Rodgers) would have us believe. Indeed, the operation of the first couple of Pools was anything but satisfactory. The amounts which were paid to our farmers by those Pools were very small considering the great increase in the cost of production. The figures which were given to me some time ago by the Prime Minister, in answer to a question, show that during 1915-16 the New South Wales farmers received only 4s. 10d. per bushel for their wheat, and this amount was supplied to them in six different advances, extending over a very long period. As a matter of fact, that Pool has not yet been cleaned up. In the year 1916-17 the farmers of New South Wales received only 3s. 3d. per bushel for their wheat, whilst the average sum paid to them over the four periods covered by the Pools amounted only to 4s. 2d. per bushel.

Mr. MAXWELL.—Would they have been better off without the Pool?

Mr. GREGORY.—That is very problematical. I am doubtful whether the first Pools could have been managed very much worse than they were. However, I do not wish to discuss that phase of the question now. But, in view of the increased cost of labour, of seed wheat, and, indeed, of everything that the farmer requires, it must be admitted that 3s. 3d. per bushel was an absolutely absurd price to pay to the farmers. The Department of Agriculture in the United States of America, in a report which it recently issued, says that the cost of wheat production there has averaged 8s. 11d. per bushel. In New South Wales over the four periods to which I have referred, the average selling price of wheat was 4s. 2d. per bushel, in Victoria it was 4s. 9d. per bushel, in South Australia 4s. 6d. per bushel, and in Western Australia about 4s. 6d. per bushel. We know perfectly well that wheat has not been a

paying proposition for the farmer during recent years. The Prime Minister himself knows how difficult this proposition has been for the farmers of New South Wales, and I hope, therefore, that some special consideration will be extended to them. As far as the export parity is concerned, the arguments which have been advanced by honorable members opposite, and which have been stressed in resolutions passed by the Trades Hall party, clearly show that that party desires that the price of wheat shall be fixed. Its members wish to average the cost of production, and to fix a reasonable selling price for wheat in this country. I am not going to refer to the disaster which would certainly attend any such procedure, but I should like to ask honorable members how it would be possible to get at the fair average cost of production. One man secures a 10-bushel crop, while another man gets a 30-bushel crop at exactly the same cost. How would the Labour party pay the man who had harvested only a 10-bushel crop?

Mr. HUGHES.—They would need to fix different prices for different parts of the country.

Mr. GREGORY.—Exactly, the proposition is absurd.

Mr. BLAKELEY.—We have to put the honorable member and his party in such a rotten position that they have to compromise with the Government—

Mr. GREGORY.—We have put honorable members opposite in such a wretched position that they do not know where they are.

Mr. BLAKELEY.—We have forced the Government to recognise their obligations to the farmers.

Mr. GREGORY.—The honorable member and those representing country constituencies, as the result of my amendment, will have to come out into the open.

Mr. BLAKELEY.—We have compelled you to come out into the open.

Several honorable members interjecting.

Mr. SPEAKER (Hon. Sir Elliot Johnson).—Order! I again ask honorable members to cease these interjections.

Mr. GREGORY.—I do not think I have said one word that should be regarded as offensive to honorable members opposite. They seem to take my proposal somewhat bad-humouredly. Under the

amendment which I intend to submit honorable members representing country constituencies will have to come out into the open and say distinctly whether they are prepared to tell the farmers of Australia that they want to fix the price of their produce. I have already pointed out how preposterous it is for the Labour party to say, "We are going to average the cost of production and to pay for your wheat on that average cost, plus a reasonable profit." The proposition is so absurd that I cannot understand why any person with a knowledge of farming pursuits should consider it at all practicable. If we are to go further than that and to say that we shall pay the farmer so much per day in respect of his labour, plus interest on the capital he puts into his industry, he will have no incentive to try to secure a good harvest. He will not take the same trouble as does a farmer who knows that his prospect of securing a good crop depends largely upon his industry and exertion.

Mr. CONSIDINE.—That is a grave reflection on the farmers in the honorable member's constituency.

Mr. GREGORY.—I am not going to class my constituents with those of the honorable member, who are quite prepared to down tools for twelve months and live on the charity of other people. If that sort of thing is wanted all round in Australia, it will be quickly secured by passing such resolutions as are recommended by their association.

I want to be very clear and to obtain by means of my amendment an emphatic expression of opinion on the part of this House with regard to the payment of export parity for our wheat.

Several honorable members interjecting,

Mr. HUGHES.—I rise to order. It is very rarely that I complain of interjections. I do not object to them while I am speaking, but I find it quite impossible, because of the many interjections that are taking place, to follow the honorable member for Dampier (Mr. Gregory). I call your attention, Mr. Speaker, to these disorderly interjections.

Mr. SPEAKER.—The Prime Minister has found it necessary to specially call my attention to the disorderly interjections which, despite my appeals to honorable members to observe the rules of the House, are constantly going on. I desire now to intimate that I shall name the

next honorable member who does not obey the call of the Chair to order. I give this fair warning, since I do not propose to be continually exerting my voice in the effort to prevail over the disorder which, for some unknown reason, seems to arise every now and again. I ask that the honorable member for Dampier be heard in silence.

Mr. GREGORY.—I thank you, Mr. Speaker. It has been exceedingly difficult for me to carry on, and I repeat that I have not said a word that should arouse the ire of any honorable member. I can account for these interjections only by the fact that this is Friday morning.

I was about to point out when interrupted that the export parity should be determined by the Central Wheat Board, which has to carry on negotiations with different countries. It is its duty to make investigations in regard to all these matters, and must, therefore, have at hand full details to enable it to make sales in different parts of the world. That being so, it should be left to the Central Wheat Board to determine what the export parity shall be. I wish the House to be very insistent in regard to this matter. In the early stages of the war the London parity for wheat was 5s. 2d. per bushel, and it was clearly and definitely understood by the people of Australia, when the Wheat Pool was established, that London parity should be paid for all wheat sold for consumption in Australia.

Mr. RILEY.—Nonsense!

Mr. GREGORY.—I would refer the honorable member to the preamble to an Act passed by the Victorian Parliament when the Pool was originated. It sets out that the Prime Minister of the Commonwealth—and we had at that time in power a Labour Government of which the present Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Tudor) was a member—and the Ministers of Agriculture of the four wheat-producing States of Australia had agreed that the price paid for wheat in Australia should be London parity. The Victoria Parliament was the only State Legislature to pass a measure legalizing the Pool.

Mr. HUGHES.—The Board was established on the principle of London parity.

Mr. GREGORY.—Yes, and that is absolutely confirmed in the Victorian Act to which I refer.

Mr. LAZZARINI.—The farmer did not get London parity for his wheat during the war period.

Mr. GREGORY.—No. In consequence of certain industrial troubles which took place in Victoria, while the then Prime Minister was in the Old Country, the Acting Prime Minister, Senator Pearce, on behalf of the Government, of which the present Leader of the Opposition was a member, reduced the price of wheat for local consumption from 5s. 2d. per bushel, which was London parity, to 4s. 9d. per bushel. That was a clear departure from the pledge which had been made, and a robbery from the farmer of 5d. per bushel. We must have no more of that sort of thing. The Prime Minister was quite emphatic in stating that export parity should be paid for wheat. I wish, however, to be perfectly fair. If wheat becomes so dear that difficulty arises here I have no objection to the Government entering into purchasing wheat for local consumption, and selling it below London price. If a cheap loaf is to be given to the people, who should pay for it? Should one section of the community alone pay for the concession? It is not fair that the farmer alone should be called upon to provide for the giving of a cheap loaf for the people. I, therefore, say that the price here should be export parity, but that the Government of the Commonwealth or of any State should be free to purchase wheat for local consumption, and sell it at a lower price. What does this huge population of Melbourne, comprising agents, doctors, and many other professional men, earning large incomes, pay for its bread? Why should they be provided, at the expense of the farmers, with a cheaper loaf than the rest of the world? Why should the farmer be compelled to sell his produce below the world's value?

Mr. RILEY.—Then, why do not the farmers control the whole marketing of their wheat without the intervention of a Pool? Why not let them do the whole of the work themselves? Why are the Government taking up the work for them?

Mr. GREGORY.—We are quite prepared to do this work ourselves; but when the war started it was realized that there were difficulties in the way of marketing our products, and that it was absolutely essential that we should increase our production. Some honorable members may not be aware of it, but we are approaching a very dangerous condition,

financially and otherwise, in this country. Our only hope is to increase primary production—to encourage people to go into the back country, and build up our primary industries. Unless that is done we shall have to face very bad times. In the absence of a prosperous community settled on the land, we cannot have prosperity in our cities. If there is no wealth in the country to pay for what our secondary industries produce, what must be the result? I repeat that the whole future of the Commonwealth depends entirely upon increased production. The Prime Minister realizes this.

Mr. CONSIDINE.—Hear, hear! Of course, he does!

Mr. GREGORY.—The honorable member is aware that I am no great political friend of the Prime Minister, and that there are many political questions on which I am bitterly opposed to him. The Prime Minister knows that perfectly well, and he knows, also, that this amendment has not been brought forward with his concurrence. In the circumstances, I feel quite satisfied that the Government will be acting in the interests of the producers and of the whole Commonwealth by accepting my amendment. I move—

That all the words after the word "Government" be left out with a view to insert in lieu thereof the words, "having guaranteed the producer 5s. per bushel at sidings for this season's wheat should arrange for payment of same on delivery by cash and certificates, such certificates to be repayable in such instalments and at such periods as recommended by the Central Wheat Board; and, in the opinion of this House, nothing should be done that would prevent the producer from receiving export parity for all wheat, including wheat for home consumption."

Mr. RYAN (West Sydney) [11.45].—The motion of the Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Tudor) deals with a very definite subject-matter. It calls upon the Government to fulfil the pledge which was given by the Prime Minister at Bendigo in his policy speech—to guarantee a sum of 5s. a bushel at railway sidings for the 1920-21 wheat crop. The ambit of the discussion upon a motion of that sort should be very narrow. It really should be confined to the meaning of that pledge, and the question of whether it has been carried out. What does the pledge mean? What is the meaning of the plain words that were used by the Prime Minister? What is the meaning

of the words "a guarantee of 5s. a bushel at railway sidings for the 1920-21 crop"?

Sir JOSEPH COOK.—What is your idea of a guarantee?

Mr. RYAN.—My idea of a guarantee is that it means what it says. It is a guarantee of 5s. a bushel at railway sidings.

Mr. POYNTON.—At some time.

Mr. RYAN.—That is, on delivery at railway sidings. It can mean nothing else. The honorable member for Flinders (Mr. Bruce) has taken it upon himself to give an explanation of the meaning of "guarantee." He says a guarantee does not mean a payment, but that it is an undertaking by some one else to make good a payment. Supposing I go that far with him. Accepting his meaning of a guarantee, then, it is a guarantee to do what? It is a guarantee to make good a payment of 5s. a bushel at railway sidings if some one else does not pay it. If the farmer can get 5s. a bushel in cash on delivery at railway sidings from some one else, there is no necessity for the Government to pay the 5s., but if the farmer cannot get 5s. in cash per bushel at railway sidings, then the Government's guarantee comes in, and the Government have to pay the 5s. in cash. That is the plain meaning of the pledge, accepting the definition given by the honorable member for Flinders. If you give a guarantee, it is a guarantee to do something definite, and, in this particular case, the Prime Minister set out a definite thing that he guaranteed to do. Does any honorable member sitting opposite believe that, if some private company guaranteed to a particular farmer that he would get 5s. per bushel at the railway siding, the company would not be bound to pay the cash on delivery at the railway siding if some one else did not pay it?

Mr. GREGORY.—Those words, "at railway sidings," meant that there would be no deduction for freight.

Mr. RYAN.—The words are plain English words. Honorable members opposite are in this position, that they can either accept the plain English meaning of those words, or go into those technical explanations and excuses in order to justify them in not carrying out the pledge which they solemnly gave to the farmers. If the Government found that they were unable to carry out their

guarantee, the fair and proper course for them to take would be to come down here and say so. They could say, "The financial position has so developed that we are not able to carry out the pledge or guarantee which we gave to the farmers."

Sir JOSEPH COOK.—If we did that, would you withdraw this motion?

Mr. RYAN.—I should be inclined to reply that then we should want a Government in power which could so manage the financial situation as to be able to carry out the pledge. I think so, because the party which is led by my honorable friend, the honorable member for Yarra, gave the same pledge to the farmers of this country when we were seeking support at the recent election. A guarantee was given that 5s. per bushel would be paid at railway sidings. We know what it meant. I know what I meant when I was referring to it, and I know what the honorable member for Yarra meant. We meant a payment of 5s. in cash at railway sidings, and, therefore, in moving this motion we are not only seeking to condemn the Government for their failure to carry out the pledge which they gave, but we are also endeavouring to give effect to the policy and programme which we put before the country when we sought to be returned to power.

Sir JOSEPH COOK.—This question of wheat payment should not be a party question.

Mr. RYAN.—It is not a party question.

Sir JOSEPH COOK.—Very well. Will the honorable member indicate to us some source from which the whole of this money can be found?

Mr. RYAN.—The doctor prescribes when he is sent for. If our honorable friends opposite are not able to carry out their pledge, then they should hand over the reins to the party who went to the country with the same pledge, and who say that they can carry it out. The honorable member for Werriwa (Mr. Lazzarini) gave a very simple explanation of how the matter could be met. He showed how credits could be given on the Commonwealth Bank in different parts of Australia in order to enable the payments to be made.

Mr. LAIRD SMITH.—Does the honorable member indorse the suggestion of the honorable member for Werriwa?

Mr. RYAN.—Yes, I think it is a very wise proposal. I have no hesitation in saying that it commends itself to me, and I am glad to have the opportunity of indorsing it. What answer do the Government make to the charge levelled against them by the Leader of the Opposition? It is a definite charge, dealing with a definite subject-matter, and there has been a definite intimation that the Government do not intend to carry out their pledge. The answer of the Government comes first from the Prime Minister, and then from his colleague, the Assistant Minister (Mr. Rodgers), and then from some honorable members sitting behind them. First of all, they seek to avoid the issue. A red herring is drawn across the trail. Misrepresentation is indulged in by the Prime Minister with regard to what supporters of this party have said in the dim and distant past. He makes no reference to the programme that was placed before the electors of Australia by this party at the last Federal election; but he makes statements, which I have no hesitation in calling misrepresentations, not only with regard to the doings and sayings of certain persons who supported this party, but also with regard to the doings of the Labour Government of Queensland. He read out a string of things which, I think, came from some Nationalist pamphlet—at any rate, they sounded uncommonly like it—things which had no foundation in fact, and which, in any event, had no relevancy to the subject-matter of the discussion in this House. That is the Prime Minister's first line of attack. He then says that this motion is premature, and he is supported in that by some of his followers. They say to us, "You have come too soon." Too soon, although representatives of the farmers have been meeting, not only in New South Wales, but in other parts of Australia, complaining that the Government are not going to carry out their pledge, and calling upon them to carry it out! The Government say that next week, if we wait until then, they are going to have a conference, and then they may carry out their pledge. That is their second line of defence. The next thing they say is that although a payment was made in cash for the last crop it was made because the crop was only a little one. That is the attitude of the Government. It is an attitude which I would

expect from them. It is clear evidence that the Prime Minister is still going on with what the honorable member for Wakefield (Mr. Richard Foster) called his manoeuvring and blundering. It is the same kind of tactics as the honorable member for Balaclava (Mr. Watt) referred to here on Wednesday, as "backing and filling." The Prime Minister also obtained support from a quarter where I would expect him to obtain it. The honorable member for Flinders—Flinders-lane—comes to the rescue. Flinders-lane is the place where the honorable member for Corangamite (Mr. Gibson) said that the profiteers could be shot with a short-range gun from an upstairs window of Parliament House. I am not making any personal reference to the honorable member for Flinders in quoting that saying, but it is remarkable that support for the Government in this matter comes from Flinders-lane. Flinders-lane interprets the guarantee, and declares that it is going to vote with the Government. Of course, it is. That is what I would expect. In fact, we all expected it. The middleman Government is naturally supported by Flinders-lane in going back on a solemn pledge made to the people of Australia to pay this amount to the farmers at railway sidings. It is an actual going back upon the policy that the Government put before the country, and that was approved by the country. What is the attitude of our honorable friends in the Country party? They were sent here—or no doubt the people who sent them here thought they were returning them—for that purpose—in order specially to represent the interests of country districts, and to be the special representatives of the farmers. What are they going to do? So far, with one exception—a notable exception, and I give the honorable member for Wimmera (Mr. Stewart) credit for the stand he has taken—they are all making excuses for the Government. Instead of helping to keep the Government up to the collar in the matter of carrying out their pledge, they have spent their time in finding excuses for the Government. They explain that the guarantee does not mean what it says. They say they did not understand it to mean that. I wonder what the farmers will think of that attitude. Should they not be the honorable members who, above all others, if they are true to their name and to the principles which they profess,

should be demanding from the Government that they carry out that pledge? But they are not doing it.

Dr. EARLE PAGE.—What is wrong with our amendment?

Mr. RYAN.—I admit, of course, that there are some who have not yet spoken. I will show the honorable member in a few minutes what is wrong with the amendment. There is something materially wrong with it, and I am astonished that the Country party should have been so misguided as to bring forward the proposal that has been tabled by the honorable member for Dampier (Mr. Gregory). It is an amendment which actually proposes to excuse the Government from carrying out their pledge. Instead of asking the Government to carry it out, and instead of waiting for the conference next week, which the Government have told us might result in their paying 5s. in cash, the Country party want to say beforehand "pay 3d. in cash and 4s. 9d. in bonds; pay what you like in cash, and the rest in bonds." They are actually opening the door for the Government to walk out. Could there be a more lamentable exhibition of a party failing in the duty which those who elected them sent them here to perform? If this amendment is carried, the Government are excused by this House from the carrying out of their pledge. They are invited not to pay cash. They are invited to give certificates. I do not know how much cash may be included in the amendment, but at all events, if carried, it would be an affirmation by the House that the Government were excused from their pledge, and that the so-called Country party had interpreted that pledge as meaning not cash, but "some cash and some certificates." What else does it mean?

Mr. GREGORY.—We have a very good idea.

Mr. RYAN.—The honorable member would have been well advised to refrain from moving that amendment.

Mr. GREGORY.—Don't you think the Leader of the Opposition, who was interested in the 1915-16 Pool, should have considered this matter a little earlier?

Mr. RYAN.—I am quite satisfied that the Leader of the Opposition did his duty in whatever capacity he held. It has been perfectly plain to every honorable member who has been following what has taken place in this House, that the

Corner party—the Country party—held a meeting while this debate was in progress, and evidently fearing that their true attitude would be exposed in the country, they withdrew to find a way out. The “mountain” has brought forth a “mouse” by the effort of the honorable member for Dampier. We have observed him passing to and fro amongst the Government representatives, discussing the matter and endeavouring to find a way out for the Government, and let the farmer down. All this tacking on about the world's parity is so much camouflage; the real purpose of the amendment is to defeat the motion of the Leader of the Opposition. What does that honorable gentleman ask? He asks that the Government shall honour its pledge to pay 5s. per bushel to the farmers on delivery at the railway siding, and he asks nothing more.

Mr. HECTOR LAMOND.—Yes, he asks for a change of Government.

Mr. RYAN.—All the Leader of the Opposition asks is that the Government pledge shall be carried out. The Corner party could support this motion if they so desired, and there is no need whatever for this camouflage about the world's parity. I am satisfied that the farmers of this country are intelligent enough to understand the real purpose of the amendment. The public are no fools, and they will readily see that the real purpose is to defeat the attempt that is being made by the Labour party, on behalf of the farmers of Australia, to have this pledge honoured.

Sir JOSEPH COOK.—An attempt to defeat the proposition to inflate the note issue by £30,000,000 or £40,000,000

Mr. RYAN.—There is no proposition to inflate the note issue.

Sir JOSEPH COOK.—Yes, there is.

Mr. RYAN.—I am referring to the proposal of the honorable member for Werriwa (Mr. Lazzarini), who did not suggest there should be any inflation of the note issue.

Sir JOSEPH COOK.—Of course, he did.

Mr. RYAN.—This lamentable amendment is only what one might have expected. Of all the explanations about this guarantee, the least logical have come from our friends in the Corner party. The honorable member for Echuca (Mr. Hill) is able to work the matter out so as to make it appear that

the guarantee means 3s. per bushel at the railway siding—that it might mean 3s. I can understand the special pleading of the honorable member for Flinders (Mr. Bruce) about a guarantee. I used to understand that a guarantee was signed as a matter of form, and paid as a matter of course; but the honorable member for Flinders has a technical explanation. The Government supporters also have a certain explanation; but the honorable member for Echuca tells us that 5s. at the railway siding may mean 3s. at the railway siding. I do not know how he arrives at that conclusion.

Mr. HILL.—I did not say any such thing.

Mr. RYAN.—I shall be sorry to misrepresent the honorable member, but I do recollect him saying that the guarantee might mean 3s. per bushel at the railway siding.

Mr. HILL.—What I said was that the guarantee, in regard to country stations, was not a promise to pay 5s. as a first payment.

Mr. RYAN.—That it might mean 3s. as a first payment?

Mr. HILL.—That it might mean the farmers would have to take 3s. as a first payment.

Mr. RYAN.—That is an explanation that I fail to apprehend. I understand “5s.” to mean 5s., and “railway siding” to mean railway siding.

Mr. HECTOR LAMOND.—It did not mean that under the scheme of the Leader of the Opposition, and it does not mean that now.

Mr. RYAN.—In this House we have the Government party, the Country party, and the Labour party. What is the attitude of the Labour party? In submitting this motion we are standing for the policy which we put before the country; and it is well that that should be understood. This is no attempt to make political capital, but an attempt to carry out the programme we placed before the electors at the end of 1919. What do we say in our programme? I refer to this in order to answer the suggestion that the motion is a mere move to gain political capital. The Leader of the Opposition in his manifesto, said—

We shall stimulate production, and with that object in view we shall guarantee to the producer a return which will secure to him a price

for his products that will cover the cost of production, and allow a reasonable margin of profit. Amongst other things we shall, in addition to carrying out existing undertakings, guarantee to the wheat-growers 5s. per bushel at railway sidings for the 1920-21 harvest, and shall consult with their representatives regarding future crops, with a view to protecting the interests of producer and consumer alike on sound economic lines.

That is the same policy that the Leader of the Opposition stands for to-day, and it is contained in the motion he has submitted.

Dr. EARLE PAGE.—He does not say "cash."

Mr. RYAN.—I understand that when we refer to paying any sum of money we refer to cash. If I say that I will give any person £5 I do not mean that I will give him a bond, but that I will give him £5 in cash, and it is just the same in regard to 5s.

Mr. GREGORY.—You did not do it.

Mr. RYAN.—This party is not in power to do it.

Mr. GREGORY.—But that party was in power.

Mr. RYAN.—We said that if we were placed in power we would carry out the pledge.

Sir JOSEPH COOK.—It is not a party question.

Mr. RYAN.—The position is a very clear one. The Government gave that pledge, and the Government have indicated that they do not intend to carry it out; and our friends of the Country party are opening a door to let the Government out. Whatever explanations may be made, that fact will remain. When the Conference meets next week, can there be any talk of a cash payment if an amendment of this sort is carried? The people will say, "Here are the members of the Country party, whom the farmers sent to this House, expressing themselves as satisfied with bonds." That is the position, and, as I say, it is a very plain one.

Mr. TUDOR.—What can the Conference do but find the money, and there is only one set of persons can do that.

Mr. RYAN.—Of course, the Government should have the power, but instead of taking up the attitude that they are masters of the situation, the Prime Minister talks about all the resources of the country "backed by the banks"—backed by the banks! Is not the country to be

the superior of the banks? I can understand the banks being backed by the country, but when we have a Government in power that makes the banks the Government, and talks of the country being backed by the banks, it is readily seen why the Government are unable to finance.

But, after all, the farmers of this country are now only experiencing what other large sections of the community have experienced on previous occasions. The Government have broken pledges time and again; and can we complain if they break further pledges?

Mr. MAXWELL.—With all their faults, the country would sooner have the Government than honorable members opposite.

Mr. RYAN.—With all their faults, the Government are preferred by the country because of misrepresentation, and because of an electoral law which was "framed up" to suit the Government purpose. What I am pointing out is that the Government, although they have broken pledges in the past, are still in power, and their success in breaking previous pledges encourages them to break more. The Government have come to regard pledges as a sort of joke; indeed, the Assistant Minister for Defence (Sir Granville Ryrie) is laughing, for he knows that the Government make pledges fully intending to break them.

Sir GRANVILLE RYRIE.—What are you going to do about it?

Mr. RYAN.—Unfortunately, we can do nothing about it, except place before the House and the country the real position, in the hope that when the opportunity offers the people will see the error of their ways, and return a Government that will carry out its pledges.

Whatever happens next week, the fact will remain that had it not been for the action of the Labour party the Government would have been allowed to break this pledge without anything being said; and we on this side must be credited for bringing the Government "up to the collar." If, when the Conference is held next week, the Government are able to pay a certain amount in cash, the farmers of the country may thank the Labour party for this motion, which compelled the Government to take that step. This is another evidence that the Labour party is the only party which stands for the interests of the producer and the consumer

alike. Those two interests are identical, and they are represented in the programme which we put before the country. When the division bells ring we shall have an opportunity to see where honorable members are. The honorable member for Dampier (Mr. Gregory) need not have any fear—he will have to come into the open, and show the wheat-growers of this country what he stands for. The wheat-growers will see by this division that the men they have to look to for support are the miners of Newcastle, the waterside workers along our coasts, and the men in the shearing sheds, whose interests are identical with their own. We shall have accomplished something if we compel the Government to give, at all events, a substantial amount in cash—if we show the farmers who are their true friends.

Mr. LAZZARINI.—I desire to make a personal explanation. The Treasurer (Sir Joseph Cook) has, deliberately or unknowingly, represented by interjection more than once that in my remarks I advocated the issue of notes to finance the wheat. I advocated nothing of the sort. I pointed out that Sir Joseph Carruthers, in the Legislative Council of New South Wales, advocated that policy, but that I did not. I advocate a policy altogether different, namely, the extension of the operations of the Commonwealth Bank, and the creation of credit instruments, by means of cash credits in the bank, to finance the scheme. I object to the Treasurer misrepresenting me.

Sir JOSEPH COOK.—It is the same thing, only a little worse.

Mr. LAZZARINI.—It is nothing of the sort. If the Treasurer desires to discuss the matter, I desire him, when he refers to my arguments, to quote them as I gave them, and not misrepresent me.

Sir JOSEPH COOK.—I accept the honorable member's explanation.

Mr. McWILLIAMS (Franklin) [12.15].—A great deal of this discussion hinges upon what was meant by the guarantee given by the Prime Minister (Mr. Hughes). When my friends opposite were in office they gave a guarantee, but they did not pay the full amount immediately in cash.

Mr. MAHONY.—Who was in office then? It was the present Prime Minister.

Mr. LAVELLE.—What guarantee is the honorable member referring to?

Mr. McWILLIAMS.—The guarantee given in regard to the 1915-16 harvest.

Mr. LAVELLE.—Show it to me.

Mr. SPEAKER (Hon. Sir Elliot Johnson).—On several occasions this morning I have been obliged to call the attention of the House to the disorder prevailing, and I wish to warn honorable members who may not have been in the Chamber when I have spoken previously, that I shall name any honorable member who, upon being called to order, refuses to obey the call, and immediately afterwards interjects. It is the duty of the Chair to afford every honorable member a proper opportunity of making his speech in reasonable silence. Therefore, while I may overlook an occasional interjection which may possibly be helpful, I cannot permit a chorus of interjections, which is very objectionable.

Mr. McWILLIAMS.—When the 1915-16 guarantee was given it was not paid in cash in the first payment.

Mr. LAVELLE.—What were the terms of the guarantee?

Mr. SPEAKER.—An honorable member must not interject immediately after I have drawn attention to the disorderliness of interjections.

Mr. LAVELLE.—But it was a helpful interjection.

Mr. SPEAKER.—Order! The honorable member is not in order in interrupting a speech in that way.

Mr. McWILLIAMS.—I repeat that the whole question hinges upon what the Prime Minister meant by the guarantee he promised. My opinion is that he did not give the matter much consideration at the time. He was then engaged in a campaign in the wheat-growing areas represented by some of my friends who are sitting behind me, and, unquestionably, it was a bit of a political bid which did not come off. However, in the condition of the finances to-day, I regard it as impossible for the Government to provide a cash payment of 5s. per bushel for wheat. They could not raise the terrific amount of money which would be involved in making such a payment.

Mr. CONSIDINE.—Then why do they not say so?

Mr. McWILLIAMS.—I cannot help what they say. I want the 5s. to be paid in cash if the money can be raised, but as

the Government cannot get the money, nothing is to be gained by chasing rain-bows. The Prime Minister has announced that during the coming week a conference will be held, after which he will tell us how much cash the Government will be prepared to pay, and what arrangements they are ready to make.

Mr. TUDOR.—How can the conference find the cash?

Mr. McWILLIAMS. — The Prime Minister will probably consult the conference, and seek its advice as to how the cash can be found. But, if after the conference the Prime Minister does not announce that the farmers will be paid a very considerable portion of the 5s. in cash, and given a satisfactory bond for the balance which can be used as cash, he will have to face this House, and honorable members can take up whatever position they choose in regard to the matter. A pitiful tale has come to me in scores of letters written by men of repute, and resolutions have been adopted by communities right throughout the northern portion of Victoria, and in the wheat-growing areas of New South Wales, pointing out that in very many cases the wheat-growers will not be in a position to finance the garnering of their harvest. Tasmania is not a wheat-growing State, and there are no wheat producers in my electorate, but owing to delays to shipping occasioned by the strikes and the war, the fruit-growers there have had to watch their fruit rotting in the orchards, and have been obliged to suffer most serious privations in order to pay the interest on their mortgages, and carry on until the next season. Wheat-growers in a considerable portion of New South Wales have been in precisely the same position, and although the farmers in the northern portion of the Mallee district of Victoria may not have been handicapped to the same extent, many of them have been hard put to it to know how to carry on. However, I am not concerned as to what the Prime Minister meant by his guarantee. The finances of Australia have got into such a deplorable position that it is not possible for the Government to raise £35,000,000 or £40,000,000 during the next two or three months when, if a cash payment were to be made for the wheat, the great bulk of the money would have

to be found. Nevertheless the Government should strain every nerve to make the proportion paid in cash as large as possible, and give a satisfactory bond or certificate for the balance, which will enable the farmer to finance himself until his wheat is sold.

Mr. RODGERS.—There is a substantial difference between fruit in store and wheat in store, in respect of which a certificate has been issued, because the wheat in store has a good commercial value.

Mr. McWILLIAMS.—There is not the slightest risk in guaranteeing 5s. per bushel for wheat.

Mr. LAVELLE.—When there is not the slightest intention of paying it.

Mr. BRENNAN.—Micawber used to give his I.O.U., and there was never any harm done.

Mr. McWILLIAMS.—Wheat bonds and wheat scrip are negotiable securities all over the world; but if there is to be any attempt to renew the wheat-scrip gambling and robbery of the last few years it will have no support from me. All the stock-brokers and financiers of the Commonwealth, and even, I am sorry to say, many farmers who were in a position to do so, bought scrip and battered on the misery of the growers who were not in the same fortunate position. There must be no more scrip manipulation.

Mr. RYAN.—Very few farmers would do that.

Mr. McWILLIAMS.—Unfortunately, the farmer who was in a position to finance his operations bought scrip from the man whose circumstances compelled him to sell it; but the great bulk of the scrip dealing took place on the stock exchanges in the cities.

Mr. HILL.—The farmers who bought scrip purchased it on the stock exchanges as others did.

Mr. RYAN.—But if the amendment is carried, what will prevent it happening again?

Mr. McWILLIAMS.—I hope the House will prevent it. I prefer bonds to certificates. When the form of the certificate is defined here, I hope the Government will see that it is a direct bond bearing the guarantee of the Government, and not a certificate on the farmer's wheat lying at the railway siding. Honorable members of the Country party are endeavouring to do their best for the farmer in

a practical way. There is not an honorable member in the House who would not like 5s. to be paid in cash; but in the state of the finances of the Commonwealth it is practically impossible to raise £35,000,000 or £40,000,000 in two months. I hope the cash advance will be more than 2s. 6d. per bushel. Any proposal to pay less than fifty-fifty will have no support from me. My honorable friends opposite put forward the suggestion that there may be a cash payment of 3d. or 6d. per bushel, and a certificate of 4s. 6d. per bushel; but they are quite misinterpreting the object which members of the Farmers' party have in view. Nothing less than fifty-fifty will satisfy me, and I hope that the cash payment will be more than half.

Mr. RYAN.—Does not the amendment whittle down the pledge given by the Prime Minister?

Mr. McWILLIAMS.—I am not a bit concerned about the pledge given by the Prime Minister. I am concerned about the fact that we have thousands of men in Australia in financial difficulties, and I want to arrive at a practical way of getting them out of their difficulties.

Mr. PARKER MOLONEY.—Is not the country worth the £35,000,000 or £40,000,000 involved?

Mr. McWILLIAMS.—It hurts any member of the National Parliament to admit it; but, nevertheless, it is a fact that we have allowed our finances to get into such a condition that I do not believe it would be a practicable proposition for the Government to attempt to raise £40,000,000 within two months for the payment of this 5s. per bushel.

Mr. CORSER.—The guarantee given by the New South Wales Government is only 2s. 6d. per bushel.

Mr. McWILLIAMS.—I am not concerned with that guarantee. The New South Wales Government must stand up to their obligations in this respect, just as we are obliged to do so.

Mr. PARKER MOLONEY.—Why does the honorable member claim that the Labour Government in New South Wales should stand up to their pledge while he is trying to let the Commonwealth Government down?

Mr. McWILLIAMS.—I am not trying to let the Commonwealth Government down. The New South Wales Government will probably be obliged to make an

arrangement on the lines we are endeavouring to put forward. However, there are plenty of avenues open to us for fighting our political battles, and I think I have shown that I am quite prepared to take my part in them; but for Heaven's sake do not let us make the misery and hardship of these men, who are right up against trouble, the football of our politics.

Mr. RYAN.—We are not doing that.

Mr. McWILLIAMS.—I acquit the Opposition of the charge of having moved the motion for political purposes.

Mr. RODGERS.—Oh!

Mr. McWILLIAMS.—I am giving my opinion. I regard it as being no more a political move than is the amendment we have submitted. As I credit honorable members opposite with good intentions and a desire to help the farmer, I ask them to credit us with the same honesty of purpose. I reiterate that I am not restricting the cash payment to 2s. 6d. I hope it will be a good deal more, as much as the Government can possibly arrange to pay; but it is within the range of practical politics to pay 2s. 6d. cash immediately upon delivery, and to give a bond or certificate for the balance, which will be as good as cash, to enable the farmer to get out of his difficulties. For that reason I am supporting the amendment, and I am keeping an open mind to deal with the proposals of the Prime Minister when he submits them next week.

Mr. RYAN.—Is the honorable member not opening the door to enable the Prime Minister to escape from the pledge he made?

Mr. McWILLIAMS.—I do not think the Government are very much enamoured of the amendment, but I and the party to which I belong are honestly trying to do our best in a practical way for the wheat-growers who find themselves in financial difficulties. I stand wholly for the world's parity. The proposal made by the honorable member for Dampier (Mr. Gregory) and the honorable member for Wimmera (Mr. Stewart) on a previous occasion is unchallengeably fair and reasonable. The British Government during the war paid £50,000,000 per annum in order that the people might get their loaf at a reasonable price. If the world's parity for wheat goes too high, it will be the bounden duty of the Government to

take action. If they wish to allow the poorer people to have bread at a reasonable rate, they should take such action as will place the tax on the whole community, and not upon one particular class.

Mr. RYAN.—What would the honorable member do if the world's parity fell below the cost of production?

Mr. McWILLIAMS.—If that happens an entirely different aspect will be opened up, and the farmers will either have to go out of production, or make some arrangement—

Mr. RYAN.—Under the honorable member's policy the farmer would have to go out of wheat production. Under our policy he would not.

Mr. McWILLIAMS.—I merely reply to the honorable member that the argument advanced by the members of my party is unchallengeable. Would any honorable member on either side say that it is fair that the wheat-grower should be required to sell his product below its market value in order that the masses of the community might get a cheaper loaf? That would not be just, and I would be prepared to face any audience, even in the strongest Labour constituency, to put that view before them. I have sufficient appreciation of the people's sense of justice to believe that they would not expect one class of the community to be sweated and bled in order that the people living in the cities might get a cheaper article.

Mr. LAVELLE.—Let the honorable member resign his seat; I will resign mine, and we shall contest the electorate for Calare, which is a great wheat-growing constituency.

Mr. McWILLIAMS.—I am very much safer in Franklin. If the honorable member is prepared to go into a wheat-producing district, or into any public meeting, and tell the electors that he proposes to make one class only pay for a cheap loaf—

Mr. RYAN.—No one proposes that.

Mr. McWILLIAMS.—I ask the honorable member for West Sydney (Mr. Ryan) if he thinks it practicable for every small wheat-grower all over Australia to keep books of his costs of production throughout the year.

Mr. RYAN.—No one suggests that.

Mr. McWILLIAMS.—Nobody knows better than legal members of the House, who have had to make up the income

tax returns of small farmers, that such a requirement would cause infinitely more trouble than even the making up of the income tax returns. To ask the farmer to keep a day-to-day account of his costs of production would be to ask him to do a practical impossibility.

Mr. RYAN.—Is the honorable member in favour of raising the price of sugar to the world's parity?

Mr. McWILLIAMS.—The Government have done in respect of sugar precisely what they should do in regard to wheat. They have, quite fairly, made the whole of the people pay for the increased value of sugar.

Mr. RYAN.—But the grower does not get the world's parity.

Mr. McWILLIAMS.—We have no more right to sweat the sugar-grower than we have to sweat the wheat-grower or the fruit-grower. I shall always protest to the utmost of my ability against one class of the community being taxed in order to provide cheaper products for people in other districts. A lot of the talk about world's parity is absurd. Some honorable members, when they find that the world's parity is against them, raise the Tariff in order to raise the cost of the imported article to that of the local product. Men who do that in respect of every article of machinery that the wheat-grower uses yet say that he alone should bear the cost of a benevolent policy for the consumers of his products. The day has passed when the farmer may be required to wet-nurse the rest of the community. I rose in order to state distinctly where the Country party stands. Our amendment is put forward, not in order to defeat the Opposition, or to wet-nurse the Government, but because we believe it to be the only practical solution of an exceedingly difficult position.

Mr. PARKER MOLONEY.—The honorable member stated that he had received a number of letters from New South Wales. Did not the writers interpret the Government's guarantee to mean a payment of 5s. at the railway siding?

Mr. McWILLIAMS.—I think every one of them did.

Mr. MATHEWS.—The honorable member wants cheap sugar and dear wheat.

Mr. McWILLIAMS.—I do not. We have put forward what we regard as the only practical solution that will help the

farmer out of his difficulty, but we hold ourselves quite free to act as our judgment dictates, when the Prime Minister announces a concrete policy as a result of the conference that is to take place next week.

Mr. GABB (Angas) [12.41].—The honorable member for Franklin (Mr. McWilliams) presented a bouquet to honorable members on this side, but it was a bouquet with a brick in it. He said that he did not think the motion had been moved by the Labour party for any political purpose, any more than the Country party had moved its amendment for a political purpose. That was a bouquet containing a very sharp brick. If the Country party is so mindful of the interests of the farmer, it is a remarkable fact that only this morning, following a party caucus last night, have they come forward with any proposal. Why did not this scheme originate with them before? As all sorts of reasons have been given as to why the motion of censure has been moved, I shall state clearly, as some of my colleagues have done already, some of the real reasons which influenced us. The first was that members of the Labour party believe that an individual should keep his word, and more particularly that the Government should do so. This promise in regard to the wheat guarantee was made at election time, and was made in ordinary language which would convey the ordinary meaning to the man upon the land. We believed that when the promise was made, it was intended to bear the interpretation that the farmers have placed upon it. I am sure that if I had been able to hear the election speeches of the honorable member for Wannon (Mr. Rodgers), for instance, I would not have heard him quoting figures to show that the primary producer had done twice as well during and since the war as in the five years previous to the war. He is more likely to have said that the Government were guaranteeing to the farmer 5s. per bushel at the railway siding. It is all very well, when many circumstances are making the honouring of the promise rather difficult, to quote strings of figures and advance specious arguments in order to find a way out for the Government. This motion was moved in the interests of the moral integrity of Parliament. We believe that it is dangerous to allow any

Government to make all sorts of promises at election time, and then not keep them. A similar breach of promise occurred in regard to the war gratuity. It was a bait held out to returned soldiers for the purpose of getting their votes, and this was a bait to another section of the community for the same purpose. But honorable members on this side are not going to allow the Government to make all sorts of promises, seemingly with no intention of giving effect to them, without voicing our protest.

Mr. AUSTIN CHAPMAN.—I call attention to the state of the House, Mr. Speaker. [*Quorum formed.*]

Mr. GABB.—I thank the honorable member for Eden-Monaro for attempting to get a bigger audience for me. It is very pleasing, indeed, to think that some of the older members are following in my footsteps, and that, apparently, they believe there should be a sufficient number of members present to listen to debate. It is satisfactory to know that I have made at least one convert to this view.

I was advancing my first reason why honorable members on this side decided to submit this motion of censure. I say we could not allow the Government to make promises upon which they are returned to power, and then quietly sit down and do nothing; although excuses have been advanced why the Government have not carried out their pledges. So much for the first reason. Now for the second. Honorable members on this side, in common with other honorable members, realize that the farmers and wheat-growers, and particularly the wheat-growers in the newer areas, deserve all the encouragement that we can possibly give them. During the last election campaign I was an eye-witness of the difficulties which farmers in these newer areas have to encounter, so I know what I am talking about. I was campaigning on my bicycle, and, in order to avoid the heat of the day, I rose one morning at Eudunda before 4 o'clock.

Mr. AUSTIN CHAPMAN.—I desire to call attention to the state of the House. [*Quorum formed.*]

Mr. GABB.—I must again thank the honorable member for Eden-Monaro for endeavouring to insure an attendance of honorable members. Evidently, he thinks

my remarks are worth listening to, or else he is trying to count out the House, and thus side-track this motion of censure.

Mr. SPEAKER (Hon. Sir Elliot Johnson).—I should be obliged if the honorable member would address himself to the question before the Chair.

Mr. GABB.—Yes, Mr. Speaker, I shall do so. When the honorable member for Eden-Monaro called attention to the state of the House just now I was advancing as our second reason for submitting this censure motion, the necessity there was to give every encouragement to our wheat-growers, especially those in the newer areas, and I was giving as an illustration an incident of which I was an eye-witness during the last election campaign in my division. I had got as far as saying that when I rose before 4 o'clock one morning, I saw at a dam outside Endunda, some local farmers with their water cart teams drawn up alongside the dam. There I saw these farmers climbing up and down the mud banks, nearly 20 feet in height, with kerosene buckets in their hands, and then standing on a kerosene case, tipping the water into the tanks. No doubt, other honorable members have witnessed similar scenes. I am familiar with all the hardships of our farmers, for during my work in connexion with the Methodist Church, covering a period of eight years, I moved about a good deal amongst the wheat-growers of the mallee districts of South Australia, and so I know quite well what they have to put up with. We all admit that the farmers in these areas to which I allude deserve every encouragement, and this is the reason why honorable members on this side of the House have stepped into the breach in order to expose the intention of the Government. I wish some of those farmers were present when the Prime Minister was acting the clown a little while ago, and I wish they could have heard the laughter. Two scenes were before my eyes then: one, the scene in this House, and the other, the scene in which these farmers move in their daily life.

Mr. LAIRD SMITH.—The honorable member is doing a nice bit of acting now, at all events.

Mr. GABB.—The Minister is entitled to his opinion. A man who has been a member of one party, and then crawls over to another, knows—

Mr. SPEAKER.—Order! The honorable member must discuss the motion before the Chair.

Mr. GABB.—I should like to do so, Mr. Speaker, if only honorable members will leave me alone.

Mr. SPEAKER.—I remind the honorable member that if he takes no notice of interjections they do not appear in *Hansard*.

Mr. GABB.—Very well, Mr. Speaker. I have given as my second reason for this censure motion the fact that the farmers in the newer areas deserve the greatest possible encouragement in order that our primary industries may be satisfactorily developed. We should not have the spectacle of promises being made and then dishonoured, all at the expense of these men who, we all admit, are the backbone of the country. Our third reason for moving the vote of censure is that a large number of our farmers, on the strength of the guarantee, obtained monetary advances, in the hope of a quick realization, and now it looks as if they will have to wait until eighteen months after the harvest before anything like a settlement is made. The honorable member for Wakefield (Mr. Richard Foster) knows the position quite well; but when he said that as a representative of the South Australian farmers he was satisfied with the Prime Minister's promise of the best price which the financial resources of the country rendered possible, he forgot, evidently, that this was not the election pledge given by the Prime Minister. If the honorable member for Wakefield is satisfied, and is content to let the Prime Minister make one statement before an election, and then make another statement in this House afterwards, all that I can say is that I am not satisfied. I feel sure, also, that some of the farmers in the honorable member's own district, particularly that part of it which touches mine on the Murray flats, where the farmers have had hard times, will not be satisfied either. The honorable member was able to say that, so far as he was concerned, he had only to sell one portion of his wheat scrip. His financial position enables him to carry on, but many other farmers in his own district cannot afford to do that. I could, if I wished, speak of the sound position of the farmers in the better parts of my own division. No doubt, they are not worrying much over

this guarantee, because they are wealthy. But there are others, and it is on their behalf that we speak now. They interpreted the promise made by the Prime Minister in the ordinary way, just as would the man in the street; and they certainly understood that it meant cash.

Mr. AUSTIN CHAPMAN.—I call attention to the state of the House. [*Quorum formed.*]

Mr. GABB.—Now I come to the promise itself. I have listened to all the speeches made during the debate, and I think we are all agreed that the promise was to this effect:—"A guarantee of 5s. per bushel at railway sidings." Nobody will quibble about that. The election promise was a guarantee of 5s. at railway sidings. Now, what is the reasonable interpretation of the word "guarantee"? It is all very well for the honorable member for Flinders (Mr. Bruce) to say that it means payment in default of another; but I should like to remind him that the average Australian citizen has not been blessed with an academic education, nor has he had opportunities of wide commercial experience such as he has had, and, therefore, would not attach any technical meaning to the Prime Minister's promise. The reasonable course is to interpret the word "guarantee" as it is ordinarily understood throughout the country.

Mr. AUSTIN CHAPMAN.—I again call attention to the state of the House. [*Quorum formed.*]

Sitting suspended from 12.59 to 2.15 p.m.

Mr. GABB.—Prior to the suspension of the sitting I was endeavouring to deal with the word "guarantee." I was inviting honorable members to examine it, and to regard it in the light in which the Australian farmer generally has looked upon it. The distinctly technical and exclusively dictionary meaning placed upon the word by the honorable member for Flinders (Mr. Bruce) is altogether different from the meaning which has been attached to it by the man on the land. The latter is a busy man, and he has no time to consult dictionaries. He interprets a term in its accepted sense. The Leader of the Country party, the honorable member for Franklin (Mr. McWilliams), who is now supporting an amendment which practically cuts the ground

from under the motion of censure, admits that he has received numbers of letters from farmers who all expressed the view that the employment of the word "guarantee" by the Prime Minister predicated to their minds payment in cash at the rate of 5s. per bushel upon delivery at railway sidings. The Treasurer (Sir Joseph Cook) indicated by interjection yesterday, that if it meant 5s. cash, it would not be a "guarantee," but a "payment." From the view-point of this moment, one can understand that interpretation; but we have to regard the promise in the light of the period when it was made. It was uttered on the eve of harvest, as well as of a Federal election, and every farmer considered it to imply a straight-out guarantee, without possibility of a varying interpretation, for the payment of 5s. cash.

Sir JOSEPH COOK.—Where are we to get the money from?

Mr. GABB.—I admit there is a difficulty there. I do not admit, however, that the Government had any right to make such a promise for electioneering purposes, nor that the difficulty of finding the money can now excuse them from fulfilling it.

Now, I desire to turn attention to the expression "railway sidings." How is that phrase understood in the country? There is, in the mind of the farmer, a wide distinction between a railway siding and a railway station. The former is understood as a point on a railway system where there is not an established station or departmental staff. Honorable members opposite may say that a railway siding can be situated at a railway dépôt. Of course! There are sidings at all the bigger railway stations. But I am regarding this expression in the Prime Minister's promise from the view-point of the man in the country. Farmers understood that a cash payment of 5s. per bushel would be made for their wheat upon delivery at a railway siding, and not that the money would be withheld till their wheat had arrived, from some siding, at a railway dépôt, or on board ship.

With respect to the proposal of the Labour party, in this matter of payment for wheat, it has been pointed out by honorable members opposite that we did not

offer cash as against the guarantee of the Government. It may be taken for granted that had the Labour party at the time interpreted the Government guarantee as other than an undertaking to pay cash, they would have been astute enough to insert the specific word "cash" in their proposal. Without doubt the Labour party thought, as did the farmer, that the promise of the Prime Minister covered an actual cash guarantee. I am certain that if honorable members opposite, who represent rural constituencies, had told their farmer supporters during the election campaign that the promise of their Leader was not to be interpreted as a cash guarantee, they would not have polled so heavily. As an ordinary man, I ask myself why was the promise made? We have been told that it was made with a view to encouraging greater production. I will concede that that was one of the objectives. But, besides encouraging wheat production, it was made for the purpose of encouraging vote production.

Mr. WIENHOLT.—That comment applies as aptly to the guarantees of the States.

Mr. GABB.—The promises made by the States were not uttered during election campaigns, or so close to an election, as the promise of the Prime Minister. The pledge of the latter was given for two purposes, which I repeat: first, in order to encourage wheat production; and, second, to increase favorable vote production. Why has not the promise been kept? The Government say that they are keeping it. They say that they will honour it in the spirit in which it was intended that it should be kept. It appears to me that it is not going to be kept, for the reason that the difficulties are too great. What are those difficulties? As a matter of fact, some are not difficulties at all, but are advantages. One reason why the promise is not going to be kept is that its utterance encouraged too great a production of wheat. The farmers cropped vast areas and Australia is about to reap a far larger harvest than was anticipated. The promise will not be kept because Providence has treated us too kindly; practically all over the wheat-growing areas of Australia there will be a bountiful harvest. Still another reason is that the world's wheat situation has undergone a considerable change since the promise was made. The world is rapidly approaching a position in which

production will have again balanced consumption. In the course of recent reading, I learned that wheat-growing is being actively carried on in the huge territories of Manchuria. Flour is now being sent into Europe from that source, and forms a considerable factor in the market, for the reason that, owing to cheap labour conditions, it can be sold at a lower rate than the product of other parts of the world. Not only has the wheat market changed considerably since the Prime Minister made his promise, but it will have altered still more markedly by the time we have sold the last of our exportable wheat.

I propose now to quote several significant expressions by members of the Country party, including the honorable member for Echuca (Mr. Hill). I admire the honorable member for one thing at least, and that is that he is always with his party. We know where he is. He is always at hand to vote according to his party principles. The honorable member stated that the Prime Minister and the Wheat Board were much exercised because up to the present only one sale had been effected. I regret that there has not been more than one sale to date, and I certainly do not gloat over the fact. It has accentuated the difficulties of the Government in keeping their promise, but it has not absolved them. The honorable member for Echuca also said, in effect, that if the money were available to make a cash payment, he would vote for the motion of censure. It would appear that he is caught in a cleft stick. He realizes that the Government made a definite promise, and he feels that they ought to keep it; but he perceives that the financial position is such that it will be exceedingly difficult for the Government to fulfil the Prime Minister's pledge. The remarks of the honorable member for Corangamite (Mr. Gibson) were similarly concentrated upon the difficulties of the Government in the matter of finance. Admitting those difficulties, however, honorable members on this side would be failing in their duty if they permitted the Government to reap the fruits of the Prime Minister's promise, while at the same time they were unable to honour it.

In conclusion, I believe that much good has been done by discussing this motion, and if we have not done anything else, we have caused the members of the

Country party to take some active interest in the farmers' welfare. After listening to the debate for two days, the members on the Corner benches, with the exception of the honorable member for New England (Mr. Hay) had to leave the Chamber and hold a party meeting to decide what they would do. The discussion on the motion has also been the means of extracting a promise from the Government that a statement will be made at an early date in regard to this matter. I notice that the Prime Minister (Mr. Hughes) pooh-poohed the interjection of the Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Tudor) when he said that as a result of the motion, the Government had been brought up to the point where they were going to make the position clear. I am going to watch the operation that will soon take place, with great interest. The members of the Labour party are accused by many of not having any interest in the farmers' welfare, but it must be admitted that we are more than doing our share, even in comparison with the members of the Country party, in keeping the Government up to their obligations. The members on the Corner benches claim to be the farmers' friends, but one of their members has now moved an amendment which will be the means of opening the door to enable the Government to avoid the difficulties confronting them. During the six or seven months I have been a member of this Parliament, I have never, until to-day, heard the Prime Minister appeal for a quiet and attentive hearing for any honorable member, but this morning he made that request on behalf of the honorable member for Dampier (Mr. Gregory). I realize that that honorable member is the ambassador for the Government in the Country party, and he has introduced this amendment to enable the Government to clear itself. I shall watch with interest the result of the representatives of the so-called Farmers' party opening the gate for the Government to ignore its obligations. Any observant man in this community must realize that during the period of stress and drought the primary producers of the Commonwealth, and particularly those in New South Wales, have experienced untold hardships, and their friends in the Corner are now opening the way for the Government and the middlemen to

Mr. Gabb.

get away in the smoke. If that is so, we might well say, "Save us from our friends."

Mr. HUGHES (Bendigo—Prime Minister and Attorney-General) [2.35].—The amendment of the honorable member for Dampier (Mr. Gregory) has perturbed the ranks of Tuscany, and members opposite are in great doubt as to what they should do. During the luncheon adjournment, instead of paying regard to those priceless laws of health that the ages and our own experience have taught us to disobey at our peril, and allowing their digestions to have an opportunity of carrying out their mysterious processes, they have been engaged in ruminating over this amendment. The way of the transgressor is hard. The motion has been moved, and lo! and behold there has come this amendment, intruding its rude presence on their special preserves. It is very unfair. They had hoped to gain from this some kudos, but now the difficulty confronting them is which way they are going to vote.

Mr. TUDOR.—Which way are you going to vote?

Mr. HUGHES.—Ah! Which way are you going to vote? I did not have the opportunity of hearing the honorable member for Angas (Mr. Gabb), before the luncheon adjournment, but since we have resumed he has appealed to the Deity, with whom, so far as I can gather, he is on intimate terms. He is solicitous concerning the future welfare of the farmers, and pictures their difficulties in struggling against a thousand obstacles, such as drought, flood, and other adverse conditions. He did not mention the Labour party, but no doubt that was an oversight. The honorable member devoted some time to discussing the difference between the meaning of "guarantee" as it appears in the dictionary, and as he understands it. We are not concerned with that any more than we are with the motion moved by the Leader of the Opposition. We know there are motions of censure, and that there are other motions. The honorable member who submitted this motion knew that it would not be carried, and took the opportunity of saying what he would do. He is a very fearless knight *sans peur et sans reproche*! If the honorable member and his supporters

had thought there was one chance in a million of the motion being carried, they would have talked until doomsday rather than allow it to go to a vote. There is hardly one of them who does not realize that in their own respective electorates it is a "toss up" whether they will ever be selected again. They see it going on every day; they saw it at the last election, and they are taking no risks.

Let me refer to the amendment. Honorable members opposite say what they would do if they were in office. They might just as well criticise the holy angels, and tell them how they would play on the harp if they were in their place. But the angels might say, "You are not here; and what do you know about playing on harps?" Where are they now? Yesterday representatives of their party went to the country. How many candidates did they put up?

MR. BRENNAN.—I rise to order. I submit that this is out of order. Yesterday we had to listen to a great deal of irrelevant inanities, and they are being repeated to-day.

MR. SPEAKER (Hon. Sir Elliot Johnson).—To what is the honorable member referring?

MR. BRENNAN.—I refer to the last sentence of the right honorable gentleman, and, generally, to his irrelevant utterances.

MR. SPEAKER.—I did not hear the Prime Minister's last sentence; but I may say that I have been able to hear scarcely a single word of the Prime Minister's speech since he commenced, because of the continuous audible conversation and interjections going on all round.

MR. ANSTEY.—You have not missed anything, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER.—An honorable member is entitled to be heard in silence, and continual interjections and audible conversation necessarily lead to disorder, which makes decorous debate absolutely impossible. I ask honorable members to cease interjecting, and if they think it necessary to converse while another member is addressing the House, not to do so in such audible tones.

MR. HUGHES.—I was endeavouring to say—

MR. BRENNAN.—But you must not say it.

MR. SPEAKER.—Order! I ask the honorable member for Batman (Mr. Brennan) not to interrupt again.

MR. HUGHES.—Why cannot the honorable member listen to what I have to say in silence?

MR. SPEAKER.—I ask the Prime Minister to address the Chair on the question before the House.

MR. HUGHES.—The honorable member for Batman will make a very fine figure in hell when he is on the grid-iron.

MR. SPEAKER.—Order! If the Prime Minister will address the Chair instead of honorable members a great deal of trouble will be avoided.

MR. BRENNAN.—I rise to order. I desire you, sir, to request the right honorable gentleman to withdraw the unkindly suggestion that I would occupy a becoming and suitable place in the lower regions. I require those words to be withdrawn, as they are an unjust reflection on me and my constituents.

MR. SPEAKER.—I ask the Prime Minister to withdraw the words to which the honorable member for Batman objects.

MR. HUGHES.—I withdraw the "grid-iron" or "hell," whichever he thinks exigent, or I will withdraw both, although I do not see why the honorable member should take exception to a destiny which may be common to us all.

MR. SPEAKER.—Order! I ask the Prime Minister to keep to the question.

MR. BRENNAN.—I am going to keep—

MR. SPEAKER.—Order! If the honorable member for Batman persists in interjecting I shall have to name him. I shall, however, give him an opportunity to apologize to the House for disobeying my directions.

MR. BRENNAN.—Do I understand, Mr. Speaker, that you wish me to apologize?

MR. SPEAKER.—Yes, I ask the honorable member to do so.

MR. BRENNAN.—I only spoke of—

MR. SPEAKER.—The honorable member interjected immediately after I called for order.

MR. BRENNAN.—If I did so, Mr. Speaker, I apologize.

MR. HUGHES.—I ask the honorable member to cease interjecting.

Mr. Considine interjecting—

MR. SPEAKER.—Order! I name the honorable member for Barrier (Mr. Considine) for disregarding the direction

of the Chair, and I call upon the Prime Minister (Mr. Hughes) to take the necessary action.

Mr. HUGHES.—We have had enough of this De Valera, Lenin, and Trotsky business, and can get on well without it.

Mr. MATHEWS.—I rise to order. Mr. Speaker. Before you insist on the Prime Minister taking the necessary action—

Mr. SPEAKER.—Order! order! I ask the honorable member to resume his seat.

Mr. MATHEWS.—Before you ask the Prime Minister to take the necessary action I request you to deal with the Prime Minister in a similar manner and name him, because before you do that I shall not sit down. I have never seen a more beastly exhibition in this House.

Mr. SPEAKER.—Order! If the honorable member for Melbourne Ports persists in his conduct I must request him to leave the Chamber.

Mr. Mathews continuing to address the Chair, and several other honorable members interjecting,

Mr. SPEAKER.—Order! I have in vain requested the honorable member to resume his seat. I call upon the Serjeant-at-Arms to remove the honorable member for Melbourne Ports (Mr. Mathews) for disregarding my direction to resume his seat.

Mr. MATHEWS.—I ask you, Mr. Speaker, to name the Prime Minister.

The honorable member for Melbourne Ports (Mr. Mathews) was escorted from the Chamber by the Serjeant-at-Arms.

Mr. SPEAKER.—The question before the House is that the honorable member for Barrier (Mr. Considine) be suspended from the sittings of the House.

The House divided.

In division:

The honorable member for Darling (Mr. Blakeley) and the honorable member for South Sydney (Mr. Riley) declining to act as tellers—

Mr. SPEAKER.—As the honorable members I have directed to act as tellers for the noes decline to do so, there is no division and the question is, therefore, unanimously resolved in the affirmative. This being the second suspension of the honorable member for Barrier (Mr. Considine), he is suspended from the service of the House for one week.

The honorable member then withdrew.

Mr. MATHEWS.—I ask you, Mr. Speaker, what is my position. Under what rule of the House did you order the Serjeant-at-Arms to remove me from the Chamber?

Mr. SPEAKER.—In what I did I acted according to precedent, and in the exercise of the Speaker's unquestionable right to preserve order. The honorable member was attempting to obstruct me in the performance of my duties as Speaker, and I, therefore, directed the Serjeant-at-Arms to conduct him outside. He was allowed to return to take part in the division which was called for, and, so far as I am concerned, the incident is now closed.

Mr. MATHEWS.—I was removed illegally.

Mr. HUGHES.—When the squall which temporarily disturbed the equilibrium of our vessel arose, I was discussing the amendment.

Honorable members interjecting.

Mr. SPEAKER.—I ask the honorable member for Dalley (Mr. Mahony) and other honorable members to cease interjecting. I do not wish to take further action unless I am obliged to do so, but I warn honorable members that if these disorderly interruptions continue, I shall do what is necessary to put a stop to them.

Mr. MAHONY.—I made no remarks whatever, and you, sir, were mistaken in your reference to me. I desire to have the matter put right.

Mr. SPEAKER.—If that is so, I apologize to the honorable member. I mistook his voice for that of another honorable member—I think for that of the honorable member for Melbourne Ports (Mr. Mathews). I ask that the interjections may cease.

Mr. HUGHES.—I wish the House to consider what is involved in the amendment of the honorable member for Dampier (Mr. Gregory), and the enormous financial obligations which it would impose on the Commonwealth and the States. If this wheat crop proves what we hope it will be, then there must be found, by the States and the Commonwealth, in the month of January at the latest, at least £45,000,000. There is our own 5s. that we would have to pay at once, and the

2s. 6d. to be paid by the State of New South Wales, which cannot amount to much less than £10,000,000.

Mr. GIBSON. — I should think, £5,000,000.

Mr. HUGHES. — I think it will be more, but I accept the correction. There is also something to be paid by the State of Queensland. Honorable members may pass what resolutions they like, but those resolutions will not improve our credit, nor advance the negotiations that the Government are now undertaking to raise the money, or to enable us to pay it. There is not a single man here, with a sense of the responsibilities which rest upon every one of us, who does not appreciate to the full what this tremendous amount of money means. The House is asked, in effect, to give the Government a direction to pay the money before the end of January. I suppose all the wheat will be delivered by the end of January, so that, beginning in December and running right to the end of January—a period of six or seven weeks—a sum of £40,000,000 would have to be found. That is a great deal of money. Last week I had an opportunity of consulting the bankers on financial matters and of going into details with the Governor of the Commonwealth Bank. I say frankly that unless we are able to make further considerable sales, the financial position of this country will not permit us to pay £40,000,000 from the middle of December to the end of January. We cannot do so.

The amendment, I think, takes cognisance of the circumstances in which we find ourselves, because it says that the Government should arrange for the payment of the 5s. by cash and certificates, such certificates to be repayable in such instalments and at such periods as are recommended by the Central Wheat Board. To that I take no exception. The Central Wheat Board is a thoroughly representative body. On it are representatives of the four wheat-producing States of the Commonwealth. All sides and sections are represented, including the consumers. I want the consumers to realize that the Wheat Board does represent them. The farmers, of course, as is very proper, have representation. The Board is, therefore, a very representative body, and it is a proper body to intrust this matter to. But

neither that nor any other representative body can go beyond the financial resources of the Commonwealth. Inside of and subject to that, however, the Commonwealth and the States ought to strain every effort to pay every penny in cash that they can directly the wheat is at the railway sidings. The farmers of New South Wales, I think, suffered more during the recent drought than any other farmers did, and if we are to make any distinction so far as cash is concerned, we should make it in favour of those who suffered most heavily. The amendment says that the Wheat Board shall decide that matter, and on that Board, as I have pointed out, all the wheat-producing States are represented. To that part of the amendment, therefore, I take no exception whatever. I ought to say that I see no prospect of being able to raise £40,000,000 before the end of January, but I shall be able to speak with more authority after the conferences that are to be held next week. I repeat that every effort ought to be made, and the financial resources of this country ought to be strained, in order to pay the last penny that is possible.

The second part of the amendment says that world's parity ought to be paid for wheat used for local consumption. If the wheat crop fetches, on an average, 10s. a bushel, and amounts to 140,000,000 bushels, that will mean £70,000,000—a colossal sum. It will certainly be the first time in the history of Australia that wheat has fetched more than wool, despite the high price of wool. But we do not know, of course, what wheat will be worth in one month, six months, or nine months' time, although we hope it will remain at that level. The amendment says that London parity or world's parity ought to be paid for local wheat, and asks that the Government shall do nothing to prevent it. I hope honorable members will follow me while I put the position quite clearly. The Government were returned upon a policy clear and unambiguous upon that point. I said, not once, but many times, that we would do nothing to prevent the farmer getting world's parity for his wheat, whether it was sold here or elsewhere. To that we stand.

Mr. GREGORY. — Those who sit opposite were with you at that time, including the

honorable member for Yarra (Mr. Tudor) and others.

Mr. HUGHES.—No, they were against me. They were not in favour of world's parity for local consumption. The honorable member for Dampier misapprehends what I said. I said that the Government and the Government party would do nothing to prevent the farmer getting world's parity, not only for export wheat, but for wheat sold in this country. The view of honorable members opposite is that, for local consumption, the price should be based upon the cost of production. The honorable member for Dampier himself pointed out this morning, not only the unfairness, but the difficulty of that proposition. For all practical purposes it cannot be done. It may cost 30s. to put in an acre of wheat in the Mallee, and it may cost £2 10s. in another place. One man may get 10 bushels per acre, and another 30 bushels. What is the cost of production? You could not fix the price on that basis.

Mr. STEWART.—They all have to take the same price now.

Mr. HUGHES.—They would not have to take the same price then. I do not know which side the honorable member is on. However, we shall soon see. Therefore, to the second part of the amendment I also take no exception, but I want to point out to honorable members, and to my fellow citizens, that the wheat is now, for all practical purposes, owned by the four wheat-producing States, and that they will decide at what price it shall be sold within Australia. This Government has nothing whatever to do with that matter, but it is pledged not to do anything that would prevent the farmers getting world's parity inside Australia. The amendment practically leaves the whole matter in the hands of the Central Wheat Board. I could have wished that the honorable member for Dampier had not anticipated the result of the negotiations that are to take place next week. I cannot but help thinking that it was unwise for the honorable member to submit the amendment, since we are going to deal with men without whose co-operation we cannot get the money unless we resort to confiscation and repudiation. We must look to the bankers to assist us, and, therefore, to pass an amendment of this kind, and then to call a meeting of the bankers to consider the

whole matter, is, in my opinion, the wrong way to go about the business.

The amendment, however, has been moved, and I am called upon to express an opinion upon it. I am asked whether I agree that we should make every effort to pay to the utmost of our ability the 5s. per bushel in cash and certificates. My answer is that the Government is prepared to do so. I am asked, further, whether I am, in favour of the Commonwealth doing nothing to prevent the producer obtaining export parity for all wheat, whether sold within or beyond the Commonwealth. I am also in favour of that, so that I can vote for the amendment. I am, nevertheless, sorry it has been moved, since I am perfectly certain that it will handicap our negotiations and render them somewhat difficult. The amendment having been launched, it is not for me to suggest that it should be withdrawn. I regret that it has been moved, but if a division is called for I shall vote for it.

I want only to point out, in conclusion, what an important bearing the local price of wheat has on the question of the guarantee. It will take, let us say, 30,000,000 bushels of wheat to feed Australia, and at 10s. per bushel, if that is to be the price, that represents £15,000,000. Then there is the seed wheat, as well as the margin that we must keep over and above the bare quantity required for home consumption. If we put that down at 5,000,000 bushels, we thus have £20,000,000 worth of wheat to be sold inside Australia, assuming that we pay 10s. per bushel for it. That is a very material consideration, and the sooner we can settle what is to be the local price of wheat the sooner we shall be in a position to say how much money we can give to the farmers for their wheat in January next.

I have nothing more to add. I am sorry the amendment has been moved, not because of what it contains, but because it anticipates the conferences which must necessarily be held, and some of these gentlemen may resent the attempt to direct them and to anticipate what they can do. If the amendment is pressed to a division, the Government will support it.

Mr. ANSTEY (Bourke) [3.10].—I am delighted that this amendment has been moved, and am pleased to have the assurance of the Prime Minister (Mr. Hughes) that if it is pressed to a division he will support it. I conclude from that statement that the honorable member for Dampier (Mr. Gregory) may possibly withdraw it. I quite agree with the demand for world's parity. I always did. It is a sound principle. When I see a nigger working on a boat for the world's parity, I want that parity for myself. I therefore, can see no reason why we on this side of the House should vote against the amendment. The honorable member for Dampier wins my admiration when, as an ardent supporter of the farming interests, he submits such a proposition. The Prime Minister, of course, objects to it because it does not emanate from the Government. As I do not come from a wheat-growing district, I know nothing about the subject, and do not profess to know anything about it. Some honorable members on both sides of the Chamber, I understand, are familiar with it; but, as a rule, those who know the least about any matter have the most to say in regard to it. That will doubtless account for the direction from which the amendment has come. It comes from the honorable member for Dampier just as appropriately as it would come from me as the representative of Brunswick brickyards.

It is suggested that this motion of censure has been submitted by the Labour party because they are trying to catch the farmers' vote. Of course, our party could not have been actuated by national considerations in moving it! It must have been put forward for some base ulterior motive; otherwise such a party as ours would not have moved it. The amendment comes from the Country party—the genuine representatives of the farming interests.

Mr. ROBERT COOK.—Hear, hear!

Mr. ANSTEY.—I am glad the honorable member applauds me. The Country party could have no greater testimonial to their genuineness than my affirmation of it. I desire only to point out that, although they were so unanimous and solid the other evening, we have now a fresh division of interests on their part. Apparently the members of the Country party, who are going to fall back in this

attack on the Government, are the very honorable members who led the onslaught against them in connexion with the Estimates last week.

Mr. TUDOR.—It is their turn to fall away.

Mr. ANSTEY.—Yes. The other evening when the honorable member for Franklin (Mr. McWilliams) led his gallant little army forward in an attack on the Government, some members of his party were so deaf that they could not hear the division bells ring. Apparently to-day some other members of the party are to be afflicted with deafness, and will not hear the bells. To-day it is the honorable member for Dampier who leads the attack really on behalf of the Government.

Mr. AUSTIN CHAPMAN.—It does not matter if they all vote, as long as they do not vote together.

Mr. ANSTEY.—Quite so. Their one object at this juncture is to save the Government. I am just as anxious to save them as is the honorable member for Dampier. If the Prime Minister can advance to me some sound reasons about the motion, just as he did to the honorable member for Dampier, he will find me quite as open to conviction, and just as ready to extend to him the same consideration.

What are these cohorts that have been moving backwards and forwards, and in and out of the chamber? To what are we to attribute the sudden absence from the chamber of certain honorable members during the last few hours? What was the reason for the invitation to members of this party and that party to go out for a few minutes? Why were one or two honorable members of the Corner party keeping guard in the House during the absence of others? Why do they come along now? Why these demonstrations by the Prime Minister? All these things are but mere party moves on the political stage. For the real things that matter no one cares a "continental." The one consideration is that our positions shall be preserved. I do not care how honorable members vote or what they do. If I think the safety of the Government is endangered I, too, will be stone deaf when the division bells ring. All I ask is that I be given fair warning. I beg honorable members opposite not to take me unaware, since, if they do, I may

be here to record my vote when the division is taken.

The amendment provides that world's parity shall be paid for all wheat, including that sold for consumption in Australia. It comes from the representative of a Western Australian constituency. The farmers of that State are to-day receiving, for the most part, good prices for their products. They have received from the State of Western Australia £1,000,000 of public money, and they have been granted far more concessions in every direction than has any other section of the community. They have been a favoured and privileged class so far as the people of Western Australia are concerned. But where is the soundness of the principle of the world's parity? Take the case of a man who has no money behind him and who goes out into the country, tills the soil, and produces nothing. Does he want the world's parity? Why, he could not exist for a single week without help from the community. Does the farmer want the world's parity when wheat is only 2s. 6d. per bushel? He does not want it then.

Mr. RICHARD FOSTER.—He has to take it.

Mr. ANSTEY.—He should not take it if he does not want it. Does he want the world's parity at that hour?

Mr. STEWART.—He has to take it.

Mr. ANSTEY.—Then let him take it all the time. But he wants to take it when the world's prices are high and not when the world's prices are low.

Mr. RICHARD FOSTER.—The world's parity always did apply to the farmers' products when prices were low.

Mr. TUDOR.—It did not apply at the beginning of the war.

Mr. ANSTEY.—No. When the world's prices are low the farmer always receives large concessions from the States. They want the world's parity only at this particular hour when the world's prices are high. Nobody will be more determined to fly from the principle of the world's parity next year if the world's prices are low than will the farmers themselves.

Mr. STEWART.—The honorable member's party did not bring forward a proposal to give the farmer a fair price for his produce when the price overseas was not fair.

Mr. ANSTEY.—I have no objection to the amendment, but why interpolate it at this particular moment for the mere purpose of wiping out the original motion? The honorable member for Dampier (Mr. Gregory) is inviting us to vote for his amendment in order that members of the Country party may escape from their obligation to vote for the original motion. But they ought not to forget that at some other time their own argument in favour of the farmer receiving the world's parity for his products will be used against them.

Mr. TUDOR (Yarra) [3.19].—Between 8 and 8.30 o'clock last evening I was informed by the Government Whip that the Ministry intended to continue the debate upon my motion until a division was taken upon it. Less than two hours later, the Honorary Minister (Mr. Rodgers) commenced to make a long speech. When he had been speaking twenty minutes, I thought that the Treasurer (Sir Joseph Cook) was urging him to cut it short, in order that we might get to a division. But instead of doing that, I learn that he was suggesting to the honorable gentleman that he should ask leave to continue his speech. Why? The reason is given in the *Age* of to-day. Long before the honorable member for Dampier moved his amendment, that journal knew exactly what was going to happen. It says—

It is probable that the Country party will move an amendment to-day to the censure motion before the House. A meeting of the party was held last night, and certain plans were discussed for the framing of an amendment that would prove acceptable to the Government and at the same time enable the members of the Farmers party to save their face and escape the trap set for them by the Labour Opposition. It was the Government's knowledge of this proposal, and the fact that an understanding had been practically arrived at on the matter between the Country party and the Government, that the debate on the no-confidence motion was adjourned so abruptly at a comparatively early hour last night. Before this understanding was reached, it was the intention to carry the motion to a division without a further adjournment, even though it might have been necessary for the House to sit all night. The Country party is to meet at 10.30 a.m. to-day to finally decide upon its plan of action. It was stated last night that members of the Farmers party favoured the Government issuing to wheat-growers bonds for the amount represented by the difference between the first advance payment on wheat

delivered at country sidings and the 5s. a bushel guaranteed by the Government. These bonds, it is suggested, could be made use of as securities, but would not be redeemable until the wheat sold was paid for by the purchasers.

Every word of that is accurate. There is not an honorable member in this chamber who will not admit that it was intended to take a division upon my motion last night. But the debate upon it was abruptly adjourned. By the way, my forecast of the result of the Victorian elections yesterday was not very far wrong. I predicted that the Nationalists would lose some seats and that the Labour party would gain some.

Sir JOSEPH COOK.—Assuming that every word which the honorable member has read be true, what is wrong about it?

Mr. TUDOR.—I will deal with that matter presently.

Everybody knows that the amendment submitted by the honorable member for Dampier would never have been moved if I had not submitted my motion of no-confidence in the Government. In other words, the amendment is a mere afterthought. The honorable member for Dampier will admit that.

Mr. HECTOR LAMOND.—If no traps were set, political tactics would not be necessary.

Mr. TUDOR.—My motion was not a trap. In moving it yesterday, I said that I was anxious to get to a vote, and I deliberately limited my remarks to less than half-an-hour, in order that we might have a short, sharp debate upon it. The long speeches have come from honorable members on the other side of the chamber. Honorable members who vote against my motion are not in favour of paying 5s. per bushel cash to the farmers for their wheat. I am now speaking to the amendment, because I do not intend to exercise my right of reply upon the original motion.

Yesterday the Prime Minister made a deliberate misstatement regarding the Inter-State executive of the Labour party which has been meeting in Melbourne.

Sir JOSEPH COOK.—That is pretty strong language. The honorable member says that the Prime Minister made a deliberate misstatement.

Mr. SPEAKER (Hon. Sir Elliot Johnson).—Order! The honorable member for Yarra must withdraw that statement.

Mr. TUDOR.—I withdraw it. When I called the Prime Minister's attention to his statement, he admitted that he was wrong. The statement to which I refer reads—

The question, they were told, was to be decided by inquiry. Inquiry by whom? The farmers? Members opposite asked the farmers to refer the price of wheat to a jury composed only of consumers.

There has never been any suggestion of that character made by any honorable member upon this side of the chamber or by any responsible member of the Labour organization. Any inquiry ought to be representative of all sides—not like the Butter Board, with its eighteen producers and no consumers; or the Bureau of Commerce and Industry, with all the members from one side. Such a method has never been adopted by the Labour party.

Mr. ROBERT COOK.—The honorable member is absolutely incorrect, so far as the Butter Board is concerned.

Mr. TUDOR.—There are no consumers' representatives on it.

Mr. ROBERT COOK.—There are.

Mr. TUDOR.—Why, I placed all the names on record before the honorable member came to this House.

Mr. ROBERT COOK.—If the honorable member is as incorrect in all his statements as he is in this—

Mr. TUDOR.—I placed on record the name of every person on the Butter Board, and there is not a consumer amongst them. When the Prime Minister stated that we desired the inquiry to be made by consumers only, he was stating what is absolutely incorrect; not a member of the organization to which I belong has ever made such a suggestion.

Mr. RYAN.—He means that everybody is a consumer.

Mr. TUDOR.—At that rate, any man from a boot factory could be accepted as a representative on a Board to inquire into the price of boots, on the ground that he wears boots; or a hatter, in the case of a hatter, because he wears hats. Every inquiry set afoot by the Labour party is

made by representatives of all the parties interested. I trust that in the vote on my motion the farmer will be given a fair deal.

Sir JOSEPH COOK.—I move—

That the question be now put.

Mr. SPEAKER (Hon. Sir Elliot Johnson).—That is unnecessary, the Leader of the Opposition having replied.

Mr. LAVELLE.—I am placed in rather a peculiar position, and I should like the matter made clear.

Mr. TUDOR.—I was not replying on the motion, but speaking to the amendment.

Mr. SPEAKER.—It has always been held that any speech made after an amendment has been moved must be taken as applying to both amendment and motion.

Mr. TUDOR.—I did not think that I was closing the debate, or I certainly should not have spoken. If I had been closing the debate, there was no need for the Treasurer to move the "gag." He, evidently, did not think I was closing the debate.

Mr. LAVELLE.—I intended to oppose the amendment, and the Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Tudor) and myself rose at the same time. The Leader of the Opposition was called upon, and if his speech closes the debate, I am prevented from opposing the amendment.

Mr. SPEAKER.—I regret the position in which the honorable member finds himself, but it is the practice, when the Leader of a party and an honorable member rise at the same time, to call on the former.

Mr. TUDOR.—May I raise a point of order?

Mr. SPEAKER.—There is no point of order.

Mr. TUDOR.—Then, may I make a personal explanation? Yesterday, the Prime Minister (Mr. Hughes) followed me after I had moved the motion, and he to-day spoke to the amendment. If it be held that my speaking to the amendment closes the debate, such a ruling has never been given before. I feel confident that the Treasurer (Sir Joseph Cook) himself did not think that I was closing the debate, or he would not have desired to move "That the question be now put." I am sure that no one can say that I have

ever been guilty of sharp practice in this House; and I remind honorable members that in the course of my remarks just now I said I was speaking to the amendment, and did not intend to speak in reply on the original motion.

Mr. HECTOR LAMOND.—The honorable member's closing remarks applied to the original motion.

Mr. TUDOR.—I said that, in order to save time, I had no intention to reply on the motion; and I trust that any honorable member who desires to speak will be given an opportunity to do so.

Mr. SPEAKER.—I am afraid it is too late now. The invariable practice has been, after an amendment has been moved, to regard all those who speak as speaking to both motion and amendment. This is the established rule. The point was decided by my predecessors in the chair.

Question.—That the words proposed to be omitted stand part of the question—put. The Committee divided.

Ayes	18
Noes	40

Majority	22
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AYES.

Anstey, F.
Blakeley, A.
Brennan, F.
Cunningham, L. L.
Gabb, J. M.
Lavelle, T. J.
Mahon, H.
Mahony, W. G.
Makin, N. J. O.
Maloney, Dr.

Mathews, J.
Moloney, Parker
Page, James
Ryan, T. J.
Tudor, F. G.
Watkins, D.

Tellers:

Lazzarini, H. P.
Riley, E.

NOES.

Atkinson, L.
Bell, G. J.
Best, Sir Robert
Blundell, R. P.
Bruce, S. M.
Cameron, D. C.
Chanter, J. M.
Chapman, Austin
Cook, Sir Joseph
Cook, Robert
Corser, E. B. C.
Fleming, W. M.
Foster, Richard
Francis, F. H.
Gibson, W. G.
Greene, W. M.
Gregory, H.
Groom, L. E.
Hay, A.
Higgs, W. G.
Hill, W. C.

Hughes, W. M.
Jackson, D. S.
Jowett, E.
Lamond, Hector
Lister, J. H.
Mackay, G. H.
Marks, W. M.
Marr, C. W. C.
Maxwell, G. A.
Page, Dr. Earle
Poynton, A.
Rodgers, A. S.
Ryrie, Sir Granville
Smith, Laird
Stewart, P. G.
Wienholt, A.
Wise, G. H.

Tellers:

Burchell, R. J.
Story, W. H.

PAIRS.

McDonald, C.	Bamford, F. W.
McGrath, D. C.	Watt, W. A.
Charlton, M.	Bayley, J. G.
Fenton, J. E.	Livingston, J.
Catts, J. H.	Bowden, E. K.
Nicholls, S. R.	Prowse, J. H.
West, J. E.	Fowler, J. M.
Considine, M. P.	McWilliams, W. J.

Question so resolved in the negative.

Mr. SPEAKER.—The question now is, "That the words proposed to be inserted be so inserted."

Mr. LAVELLE (Calare) [3.35].—Mr. Speaker—

Sir JOSEPH COOK.—I submit that the honorable member cannot speak now. I move—

That the question be now put.

Mr. TUDOR.—I submit that the right honorable gentleman should have moved "That the honorable member for Calare be no longer heard."

Mr. SPEAKER.—The Treasurer is quite in order in moving "That the question be now put."

Mr. TUDOR.—Even while the honorable member for Calare was on his feet, and without moving "That the honorable member be no longer heard"?

Mr. SPEAKER.—Yes. The standing order is very definite and mandatory. The question is, "That the question be now put."

Question put. The House divided.

Ayes	39
Noes	19

Majority	20
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AYES.

Atkinson, L.	Hill, W. C.
Bell, G. J.	Hughes, W. M.
Best, Sir Robert	Jackson, D. S.
Blundell, R. P.	Jowett, E.
Bruce, S. M.	Lamond, Hector
Cameron, D. C.	Lister, J. H.
Chanter, J. M.	Mackay, G. H.
Chapman, Austin	Marks, W. M.
Cook, Sir Joseph	Marr, C. W. C.
Cook, Robert	Maxwell, G. A.
Corser, E. B. C.	Page, Dr. Earle
Fleming, W. M.	Poynton, A.
Foster, Richard	Rodgers, A. S.
Francis, F. H.	Ryrie, Sir Granville
Gibson, W. G.	Smith, Laird
Greene, W. M.	Wienholt, A.
Gregory, H.	Wise, G. H.
Groom, L. E.	<i>Tellers:</i>
Hay, A.	Burchell, R. J.
Higgs, W. G.	Story, W. H.

NOES.

Anstey, F.	Maloney, Dr.
Blakeley, A.	Moloney, Parker
Brennan, F.	Page, James
Cunningham, L. L.	Ryan, T. J.
Gabb, J. M.	Stewart, P. G.
Lavelle, T. J.	Tudor, F. G.
Lazzarini, H. P.	Watkins, D.
Mahon, H.	<i>Tellers:</i>
Mahony, W. G.	Mathews, J.
Makin, N. J. O.	Riley, E.

PAIRS.

Watt, W. A.	McGrath, D. C.
Bayley, J. G.	Charlton, M.
Livingston, J.	Fenton, J. E.
Bowden, E. K.	Catts, J. H.
Prowse, J. H.	Nicholls, S. R.
Fowler, J. M.	West, J. E.
Bamford, F. W.	McDonald, C.

Question so resolved in the affirmative.

Question—That the words proposed to be inserted be so inserted—put. The House divided.

Ayes	40
Noes	18

Majority	22
------------------	----

AYES.

Atkinson, L.	Hughes, W. M.
Bell, G. J.	Jackson, D. S.
Best, Sir Robert	Jowett, E.
Blundell, R. P.	Lamond, Hector
Bruce, S. M.	Lister, J. H.
Cameron, D. C.	Mackay, G. H.
Chanter, J. M.	Marks, W. M.
Chapman, Austin	Marr, C. W. C.
Cook, Sir Joseph	Maxwell, G. A.
Cook, Robert	Page, Dr. Earle
Corser, E. B. C.	Poynton, A.
Fleming, W. M.	Rodgers, A. S.
Foster, Richard	Ryrie, Sir Granville
Francis, F. H.	Smith, Laird
Gibson, W. G.	Stewart, P. G.
Greene, W. M.	Wienholt, A.
Gregory, H.	Wise, G. H.
Groom, L. E.	<i>Tellers:</i>
Hay, A.	Burchell, R. J.
Higgs, W. G.	Story, W. H.
Hill, W. C.	

NOES.

Anstey, F.	Moloney, Parker
Blakeley, A.	Page, James
Cunningham, L. L.	Riley, E.
Gabb, J. M.	Ryan, T. J.
Lavelle, T. J.	Tudor, F. G.
Lazzarini, H. P.	Watkins, D.
Mahon, H.	<i>Tellers:</i>
Mahony, W. G.	Brennan, F.
Makin, N. J. O.	Mathews, J.
Maloney, Dr.	

PAIRS.

Watt, W. A.	McGrath, D. C.
Bayley, J. G.	Charlton, M.
Livingston, J.	Fenton, J. E.
Bowden, E. K.	Catts, J. H.
Prowse, J. H.	Nicholls, S. R.
Fowler, J. M.	West, J. E.
Bamford, F. W.	McDonald, C.

Question so resolved in the affirmative.

Amendment agreed to.

Question—That the motion, as amended, be agreed to—put. The House divided.

Ayes	40
Noes	18
			—
Majority	22

AYES.

Atkinson, L.	Hughes, W. M.
Bell, G. J.	Jackson, D. S.
Best, Sir Robert	Jowett, E.
Blundell, R. P.	Lamond, Hector
Bruce, S. M.	Lister, J. H.
Cameron, D. C.	Mackay, G. H.
Chanter, J. M.	Marks, W. M.
Chapman, Austin	Marr, C. W. C.
Cook, Sir Joseph	Maxwell, G. A.
Cook, Robert	Page, Dr. Earle
Corser, E. B. C.	Poynton, A.
Fleming, W. M.	Rodgers, A. S.
Foster, Richard	Ryrie, Sir Granville
Francis, F. H.	Smith, Laird
Gibson, W. G.	Stewart, P. G.
Greene, W. M.	Wienholt, A.
Gregory, H.	Wise, G. H.
Groom, L. E.	
Hay, A.	<i>Tellers:</i>
Higgs, W. G.	Burchell, R. J.
Hill, W. C.	Story, W. H.

NOES.

Anstey, F.	Moloney, Parker
Blakeley, A.	Page, James
Cunningham, L. L.	Riley, E.
Gabb, J. M.	Ryan, T. J.
Lavelle, T. J.	Tudor, F. G.
Lazzarini, H. P.	Watkins, D.
Mahon, H.	
Mahony, W. G.	<i>Tellers:</i>
Makin, N. J. O.	Brennan, F.
Maloney, Dr.	Mathews, J.

PAIRS.

Watt, W. A.	McGrath, D. C.
Bayley, J. G.	Charlton, M.
Livingston, J.	Fenton, J. E.
Bowden, E. K.	Catts, J. H.
McWilliams, W. J.	Nicholls, S. R.
Fowler, J. M.	West, J. E.
Bamford, F. W.	McDonald, C.

Question so resolved in the affirmative

Question, as amended, resolved in the affirmative.

Resolved—

That the Government, having guaranteed the producer 5s. per bushel at sidings for this season's wheat, should arrange for payment of same on delivery by cash and certificates, such certificates to be repayable in such instalments and at such periods as recommended by the Central Wheat Board; and in the opinion of this House nothing should be done that would prevent the producer from receiving export parity for all wheat, including wheat for home consumption.

POSTPONEMENT OF BUSINESS.

Motion (by Mr. HUGHES) proposed—

That intervening Orders of the Day, Government Business, be postponed until after the consideration of Notices of Motion Nos. 1 and 2.

Mr. BRENNAN (Batman) [3.56].—Is this motion debatable matter, Mr. Speaker?

Mr. SPEAKER (Hon. Sir Elliot Johnson).—I cannot say; but the motion can be debated.

Mr. BRENNAN.—Very well; I wish to oppose the motion. This is not the time, after a very strenuous day, to introduce new measures.

Mr. HUGHES.—I am not going to discuss them.

Mr. MATHEWS.—But look at all the business you are trying to put off.

Mr. BRENNAN.—It seems to me that this would be a convenient time to adjourn.

Mr. HUGHES.—I consulted the Leader of the Opposition.

Mr. BRENNAN.—I understand it is the Prime Minister's desire to postpone Orders of the Day in order to deal with Notices of Motion Nos. 1 and 2. Let me see what they are. No. 1 is that the Prime Minister have leave to bring in a Bill for an Act to amend the Treaty of Peace Act 1919; and No. 2, that he have leave to bring in a Bill for an Act to give effect to the Treaties of Peace with Austria and Bulgaria.

Mr. HUGHES.—All I want to do is to put the Bills on the table, and then you can do what you like.

Mr. BRENNAN.—It would be premature for me to discuss the Treaty of Peace, although I would like to express a few thoughts upon that subject, about which I feel somewhat strongly; and I certainly would like to protest against the long delay in promulgating peace with Austria and Bulgaria. But if it would be irrelevant to the present motion to do so, I can only say that, while this is neither the time nor the hour for the introduction of new and very grave measures of international importance—

Sir JOSEPH COOK.—The honorable member was against the war, and now he is against the peace!

Mr. HUGHES.—Why not agree, and let me put the Bills on the table?

Mr. BRENNAN.—If I am to understand that the Prime Minister gives a pledge not to go any further, I am inclined not to press my opinion at this stage; although I realize his past attitude generally towards pledges, and it must not be taken that I allow the Bills to be placed on the table without prejudice to my rights when the matter comes before us at a later stage.

Mr. ANSTEY (Bourke) [4.3].—I was sorry to hear the honorable member for Batman (Mr. Brennan) speak in this manner. Nothing disheartens me more than to hear the ardent pacifist of yesterday at this particular hour objecting to the pacific intentions of the Prime Minister (Mr. Hughes), who was not always the pacifist he is at this moment. I am a supporter and a member of the same party as the honorable member for Batman, and I have endeavoured to instil into him some of those eloquent notions with which I have identified myself. Now, sir, there is on the stocks a measure dealing with the Treaty of Peace made during the year 1919. Apparently, the honorable member for Batman does not know anything about the terms of that Treaty, or that there was a Treaty of Peace in 1919. Is he aware that in that year peace was settled for the Prime Minister at the very moment when he was trying to spread discord in this community?

Mr. TUDOR.—Tell us about the oil-painting outside.

Mr. ANSTEY.—That is the finest work of art we possess. It is an emblem of peace. It puts me in mind of Rembrandt's "Night Watchman." I understand it is very important that these measures should be introduced; that they should be laid on the table at once. Does not the Prime Minister think he has "laid" enough to-day? Does he think it is absolutely imperative he should lay these Bills on the table at this particular hour?

Mr. HUGHES.—Don't you want to make peace with Bulgaria?

Mr. ANSTEY.—Yes; I do.

Mr. HUGHES.—Then let me make peace with Bulgaria, and let us go home.

Mr. ANSTEY.—But you do not want to make peace with any one else. Very well. If there are any honorable members in this chamber who can advance any more cogent arguments than I have advanced, I shall resume my seat.

Mr. LAVELLE (Calare) [4.5].—I oppose the motion, and I may say that, after having been "gagged" so successfully by the Government on two occasions on one evening, I do not intend to be so treated again if I can help it. There are a great many items of business on the notice-paper which may fairly be said to be of considerable public importance. But there is nothing more important than the introduction of the Commonwealth Bank Bill, which, when it has been introduced, will give the honorable member for Werriwa (Mr. Lazzarini) an opportunity—at the proper stage—to move his contingent amendment. Had that Bill been introduced earlier, and had the honorable member's amendment been agreed to, we could not have had the discussion which has occupied the past two days concerning the financing of the Government's wheat guarantee; and we would not have had the spectacle of honorable members in the Corner, who claim to represent the farmers, moving an amendment to the

motion of censure, which gave the Government a way out, and which was intended at the same time to provide a way out for the Country party.

Mr. SPEAKER (Hon. Sir Elliot Johnson).—The honorable member is quite out of order. He is discussing the motion of censure which is already disposed of by a vote of the House.

Mr. LAVELLE.—I consider that I am in order in endeavouring to prove how necessary—

Mr. Laird Smith interjecting,

Mr. LAVELLE.—Why cannot you keep quiet? I never “ratted” like you did.

Mr. SPEAKER.—Order!

Mr. LAIRD SMITH.—I have got your history, and can give it here.

Mr. LAVELLE.—Does the Minister threaten me? I am not afraid of anything he can say.

Mr. SPEAKER.—Order! If the honorable member is not prepared to discuss the motion, I must direct him to resume his seat.

Mr. LAVELLE.—I will discuss it if I am given the chance; but at the same time I want to say that the allegations of the Minister for the Navy will not go down with me. He cannot threaten me. He says he has got my history. I, at any rate, have never “ratted.” I have always been true to Labour and its principles.

Mr. SPEAKER.—Order! As the honorable member persists in discussing irrelevant matters, he will please resume his seat.

Question resolved in the affirmative.

TREATY OF PEACE BILL.

Motion (by Mr. GROOM for Mr. HUGHES) agreed to—

That leave be given to bring in a Bill for an Act to amend the Treaty of Peace Act 1919.

Bill presented, and read a first time.

TREATIES OF PEACE (AUSTRIA AND BULGARIA) BILL.

Motion (by Mr. GROOM for Mr. HUGHES) agreed to—

That leave be given to bring in a Bill for an Act to carry into effect the Treaties of Peace with Austria and Bulgaria.

Bill presented, and read a first time.

PAPER.

CASE OF KEAN v. KERBY.

Mr. GROOM (Darling Downs—Minister for Works and Railways) [4.7].—The honorable member for Ballarat (Mr. McGrath) asked me if I would lay upon the table of the House copy of the terms of the judgment delivered in the case of Kean v. Kerby, arising out of the Ballarat election. I lay that judgment on the table, together with a memorandum of the Chief Electoral Officer, and move—

That the paper be printed.

Question resolved in the affirmative.

ADJOURNMENT.

LIGHTING OF HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES.

Motion (by Sir JOSEPH COOK) proposed—

That the House do now adjourn.

Dr. MALONEY (Melbourne) [4.8].—I desire to bring under your notice, sir, the ill-lighting of this chamber. It is such as to be very trying to one's eyes. I do not know how these splendid officers of the House, both the clerks and the members of the *Hansard* staff, contrive to carry on their work at the table. I have been compelled to use a stronger pair of glasses than usual, and I certainly think something ought to be done to improve the lighting.

Mr. SPEAKER (Hon. Sir Elliot Johnson).—I will call the attention of the engineer to the matter. I myself have noticed very serious defects in the lighting of various parts of this building, and have already drawn attention to those conditions.

Question resolved in the affirmative.

House adjourned at 4.10 p.m.

House of Representatives.

Tuesday, 26 October, 1920.

Mr. SPEAKER (Hon. Sir Elliot Johnson) took the chair at 3 p.m., and read prayers.

KALGOORLIE TO PORT AUGUSTA RAILWAY LANDS BILL.

Assent reported.

KALGOORLIE TO PORT AUGUSTA RAILWAY TRAFFIC.

Mr. BURCHELL.—On Saturday I informed the Minister for Works and Railways that it was my intention to ask to-day the following questions, which I now put to him:—

Will the Minister for Works and Railways advise—

- (a) If livestock traffic on the Trans-Australian railway is developing to a considerable extent?
- (b) If so, the number of stock that has been trucked over the railway during the past two years?
- (c) The number of stock trucked from the 1st July to the close of last month?
- (d) The trucking orders now with the Department awaiting fulfilment?

Mr. GROOM.—The honorable member having given me notice of his intention to ask those questions, I obtained the following replies to them:—

- (a) Yes.
- (b) Year ended 30th June, 1919—Great stock, 1,991; sheep, 26,496. Year ended 30th June, 1920—Great stock, 6,433; sheep, 33,208.
- (c) Great stock, 2,221; sheep, 19,381.
- (d) Orders booked for through traffic alone between Kalgoorlie and Port Augusta to the extent of 36,000 sheep up to 8th December next.

BASIC WAGE.

Mr. BLAKELEY.—Has the Prime Minister yet received the report of the Basic Wage Commission, and, if so, will he make it available to the House?

Mr. HUGHES.—I have not received it.

Mr. RILEY.—Seeing that the New South Wales Board of Trade has fixed a basic wage for that State, will the Commonwealth Government see that their employees in the various Departments have their salaries raised to that wage?

Mr. HUGHES.—The honorable member knows that a Basic Wage Commission has been appointed to inquire into the matters covered by the New South Wales Board of Trade investigations, in reference to not only New South Wales conditions, but also the conditions in every other State. When Ministers get the Commission's report, we shall seize an early opportunity of making it available to the House, and take such action as may be deemed proper.

PRESIDENT OF THE ARBITRATION COURT.

Mr. BLAKELEY.—Has the attention of the Prime Minister been drawn to the statement that Judge Higgins intends to resign? If so, what steps, if any, does the right honorable gentleman propose to take to secure the retention of the services of that gentleman for the Arbitration Court?

Mr. HUGHES.—My attention has been drawn to the statement. The Government will take such steps as may be necessary and proper in the circumstances to enable the Court to continue its business.

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES' OFFICIALS.

Mr. FLEMING.—I wish, by leave, to move the following motion, which I understand will be accepted without opposition:—

- (1) That a Select Committee be appointed to inquire into and report to the House of Representatives on the question of the position of the officials engaged in and about the House of Representatives, and the working of the Public Service Act so far as it concerns officers controlled by the House of Representatives or Committees of the House of Representatives, and that the Committee have power to act with a similar Committee of the Senate.
- (2) That the Select Committee consist of:—Mr. Anstey, Mr. Fowler, Mr. Lamond, Mr. Mackay, Mr. McDonald, Mr. W. Maloney, and the Mover, with power to call for persons and papers.
- (3) That the Committee report to the House of Representatives within one month from the date of appointment.

Mr. GREGORY.—We should have notice of this motion. I cannot understand the honorable member saying there will be no objection to it.

Mr. FLEMING.—Then I give notice for to-morrow.

COMMERCIAL AVIATION.

Mr. MARKS asked the Minister representing the Minister for Defence, *upon notice*—

1. Whether commercial aviation firms already established in Australia will be given an opportunity of tendering for the Defence Department's requirements and for mail and other services?

2. As extensive experiments in carrying mails by air have already been made in England, France, and America, and as the records in connexion therewith can be obtained in Australia, is it considered necessary for further experiments to be carried out by the Defence Department?

3. Will the Air Board co-operate with and advise the 90 per cent. of shire councils in Australia who have expressed their willingness to give every assistance possible in providing landing grounds, provided they are guided by a responsible Government Department?

4. As shipping is catered for by means of charts, lighthouses, dredged channels, &c., will the Government consider the urgent necessity of assisting commercial aviation by providing landing grounds, hangars, maps, &c.?

5. As several passenger-carrying time-tables have been arranged between several capital cities and outlying towns, and as the services have been suspended until the issue of the Air Navigation Regulations, when will such regulations be issued?

Sir GRANVILLE RYRIE. — The answers to the honorable member's questions are as follow:—

1. Yes, although it should be pointed out that requirements which must be imported are obtained, as a general rule, direct from manufacturers in the United Kingdom through the High Commissioner, who, in the case of aviation equipment, would have the assistance of the Australian Liaison Officer at the Air Ministry. This would be usually more advantageous than dealing through an agency in Australia.

I stated recently in the House that should the Government receive a definite offer from any civil aviation company stating exactly the route over which they proposed working, proposed time-table, type of machine and engine to be used, the number of machines to be used in the service and in reserve, the places at which they will establish landing grounds, hangars, and workshops, the amount of mail matter they are prepared to carry, and the remuneration they desire for the service, it would no doubt be seriously considered by the Government.

2. It is not thought that the records regarding the carrying of mails in England, France, and America, countries which have large populations, and where large commercial cities over various routes are fairly frequent, can be taken as a guide in connexion with the possibilities of aerial mails in Australia. It is considered that the commercial success of such mails depends entirely on the attitude of the public as to whether they are prepared to send correspondence by air, and, perhaps, to pay extra

for the faster service. It is considered, therefore, that the only possible way of arriving at a proper conclusion is by an actual trial in Australia.

3. Yes. As soon as it is possible certain definite air routes are to be surveyed and mapped, and over these particular routes officers will be sent out for the purpose of getting into touch with those shire councils and others concerned.

4. The Government will take action along the lines suggested in the question, though it is doubtful whether it will be possible to provide hangars for purely civil purposes.

5. Legislation for the control of civil aviation is being prepared for submission at the present session. Meanwhile, those whose activities will be regulated thereby may assume that Australian regulations will follow British provisions, subject only to such modifications as might be found necessary for local conditions.

FUEL OIL.

Mr. ATKINSON asked the Minister for the Navy, *upon notice*—

Whether he will inform the House—

1. From whom he recently contracted to purchase fuel oil at £7 10s. per ton?

2. The quantity of oil purchased and the duration of the contract?

3. Where the oil is that is to be delivered in Australia?

4. Is the price mentioned the amount to be paid for the oil (a) at the well's mouth; or (b) at some place in Australia?

5. If the former, what will be the cost of transport from the well's mouth to the port of delivery in Australia?

Mr. LAIRD SMITH.—The answers to the honorable member's questions are as follow:—

1. From the Anglo-Saxon Petroleum Company.

2. Approximately 4,000 tons; the contract covers this quantity only, which represents one cargo.

3. Part of this cargo will be delivered at Sydney, and balance to H.M.A. ships.

4. The price to be paid is f.o.b. oiler at Borneo.

5. The cost of transporting the oil will be £2 5s. per ton.

STATE POSTAL INSTITUTES.

Mr. FLEMING asked the Postmaster-General, *upon notice*—

What steps have been taken for the establishment of the Postal Institute in States other than Victoria, particularly in New South Wales?

Mr. WISE.—The answer to the honorable member's question is as follows:—

New South Wales.—The Institute Organizer has just completed an investigation of the facilities available at Sydney, and £2,050 has

been included in the Estimates now before the House to provide an adequate Institute so far as the existing conditions will permit. It is the intention to provide a complete Institute when the General Post Office has been remodelled.

Queensland.—The Institute Organizer has also just returned from Brisbane, where he has been conducting a similar investigation, and the matter of establishing an Institute there under present conditions is under consideration.

South Australia.—Provision has been made in the Adelaide building proposals for the purpose of an Institute, and steps will be taken to establish it as soon as circumstances permit.

Western Australia.—Provision for Institute accommodation has been made in the new General Post Office, Perth, and the matter will be taken in hand as soon as the building is completed.

Tasmania.—An Institute will be established as soon as opportunity offers.

POSTMASTER-GENERAL'S DEPARTMENT.

MECHANICAL BRANCH RESIGNATIONS.

Mr. RILEY (for Mr. LAZZARINI) asked the Postmaster-General, *upon notice*—

Whether he will inform the House how many officers of the mechanical branch of the Department have resigned their position during the last two years?

Mr. WISE.—During the period 1st October, 1918, to 30th September, 1920, 125 officers of the mechanical branch of the Postmaster-General's Department resigned their positions.

MILITARY PRISONERS IN AUSTRALIA.

Mr. MATHEWS (for Mr. BRENNAN) asked the Minister representing the Minister for Defence, *upon notice*—

1. How many persons approximately who were convicted by court martial are imprisoned for military offences in prisons in Australia?

2. How many are in the Pentridge stockade at Coburg?

3. Are some of the latter "hunger-striking"?

4. Have grave complaints been made regarding the medical treatment of these last?

Sir GRANVILLE RYRIE.—The answers to the honorable member's questions are as follow:—

1. There are twenty-one ex-members of the Australian Imperial Force convicted by courts martial serving sentences in prisons and Detention Barracks in Australia. Of these four were convicted for military offences, and seventeen for civil offences, such as manslaughter, robbery with violence, forgery, shooting with intent, and theft.

2. Eight, comprising one for military offences, and seven for civil offences.

3. The State prison authorities, in whose charge these men are, have reported that some of them were hunger striking, but it is understood that this has now ceased.

4. No such complaints have been made to the Defence Department.

FEDERAL CAPITAL DESIGN.

Mr. STORY (for Mr. AUSTIN CHAPMAN) asked the Minister for Home and Territories, *upon notice*—

1. Is it the intention of the Government to give effect to Mr. Griffin's design for the Federal Capital at Canberra?

2. Is it the intention of the Government to empower Mr. Griffin to give effect to his design forthwith?

3. Is it a fact that adequate plans are available to enable the work to proceed at once?

4. If so, do the Government intend to give effect to such plans, and thus honour the decision of Parliament?

Mr. POYNTON.—The Government have already announced its intention of proceeding with the Federal Capital. It is proposed to generally observe the design furnished by Mr. Griffin, subject, of course, to the obligations of the Commonwealth Public Works Committee Act. With a view to an early occupation of the area, consideration is being given to a scheme for the provision of works, temporary and permanent. Meanwhile, the initiation of certain preparatory works is being authorized.

POWER SUPPLY FOR AUSTRALIA.

Dr. EARLE PAGE asked the Prime Minister, *upon notice*—

Whether, in view of the presence in Australia of Sir Arnold Gridley, formerly controller of electric power supply in Great Britain during the war, the Government will consider the advisability of obtaining a report from him on the best methods of securing a comprehensive power supply scheme for Australia that would insure economical development and maximum benefit without overlapping?

Mr. HUGHES.—This is a matter for consideration by the State Governments.

NATIONAL SONG FOR AUSTRALIA.

Mr. GABB asked the Prime Minister, *upon notice*—

Whether he will appoint a Committee of musical experts to decide upon or compose a distinctly national song for Australia, so as to bring about uniformity in the matter?

Mr. HUGHES.—No.

SOLDIER SETTLEMENT IN STATES.

Mr. CAMERON asked the Acting Minister for Repatriation, *upon notice*—

1. What are the terms that govern the grant of £1,000 per soldier land settler to the States by the Commonwealth Government?

2. To what purposes must this money be applied by the States?

Mr. RODGERS.—The answers to the honorable member's questions are as follows:—

1. In connexion with land-settlement work undertaken by the several State Governments, the Commonwealth agreed to advance a definite sum to settle a fixed quota of returned men. At the last Premiers' Conference, further financial assistance was sought; and, as the proposals were so extensive, and the cost of placing the settlers on the land varied so much, the Commonwealth agreed to advance, for any additional settlers over and above the quota previously agreed upon, a sum equal on a flat basis to £1,000 per settler, being £625 on the average as working capital for each settler, the balance being applied to cover the cost of land resumptions and works, incidental to land settlement, which have been approved by the Commonwealth Government.

2. See No. 1.

SUPPLY OF SUGAR FOR JAM MAKING.

Mr. GREENE.—On the 14th October, the honorable member for Angas (Mr. Gabb), asked the following questions:—

1. Whether the Colonial Sugar Refining Company have informed the South Australian Fruit-growers' Co-operative Society that it will be unable to let it have sugar for its new fruit-preserving factory, at Nuriootpa?

2. If so, will the Minister explain how it is that this fruit-growers' society in South Australia has been refused sugar, when the jam manufacturers of Tasmania and Victoria are able to obtain sufficient, not only for home consumption, but to make and export jam to South Australia and overseas?

I am now in a position to furnish the honorable member with the following replies to the above questions:—

1. No. The facts are that the Fruit-growers' Association of South Australia was promised 100 tons of sugar per month; but this quantity was subsequently increased by 10 tons per month. The manager of the association then asked for 50 tons per month for a new cannery to be opened at Nuriootpa in December next. The Colonial Sugar Refining Company naturally declined to promise a definite quantity of sugar for a factory which is not yet in existence, but promised that everything possible, so far as the stocks of sugar on hand might permit, would be done to assist the new factory. I might add

that arrangements which have now been made will, I hope, enable us to supply all necessary sugar for jam-making and canning purposes.

2. See reply to No. 1.

MR. ERNEST TILL.

Mr. HUGHES.—On 15th October, the honorable member for Hume (Mr. Parker Moloney) on behalf of the honorable member for Gwydir (Mr. Cunningham), asked me the following questions:—

1. Is it a fact that one, Ernest Till, permanently resident in New Guinea, but for some months past, for health reasons, temporarily resident in Sydney, has been refused permission by the Public Trustee to operate on his banking account at Rabaul, on the ground that he was an enemy alien?

(2) If this is so, in view of the fact that Dr. J. V. Danes, Consul for the Czecho-Slovak Republic, has certified that the said Ernest Till is a subject of the Czecho-Slovak Republic, is it the intention of the Federal Government to permit him, and other similarly situated, to freely operate on their own accounts at Rabaul?

I then promised to make inquiries into the matter; and I am now in a position to furnish the honorable member with the following replies:—

1. Mr. Till is reported to be a national of an ex-enemy country, who was granted permission by the Administrator of German New Guinea to leave that Territory on 20th April, 1920, with £600 in his possession to cover his maintenance in Sydney until October, 1920, when he expected to return to Rabaul. In July last, Mr. Till reported to the Public Trustee that, in addition to having spent £600, he had borrowed and spent £180, making his total expenditure £780 for three months; and he asked for permission to withdraw from New Guinea a further sum of £500 to meet his indebtedness, and to cover his cost of living until he left for Rabaul in October, 1920. On behalf of the Administrator of German New Guinea, inquiry was made into the case by the Public Trustee, who advised Mr. Till that the Public Trustee would be prepared to support any application he might make to the Administrator for £65, as representing a sum to maintain him at the rate of £5 per week until 20th October, 1920. Until Mr. Till produces definite proof that he is not of German, or Austrian, nationality, it is considered undesirable to allow him to withdraw from German New Guinea large sums of money which, under the present circumstances, are subject to retention for the Reparation Fund.

2. No restriction will be placed by the Federal Government upon the property of persons who prove, in accordance with the requirements of the Treaties of Peace between the Allied and Associated Powers and Germany and Austria, that they are subjects of the Czecho-Slovakian Republic.

NAVIGATION BILL.

In Committee (Consideration of Senate's message, resumed from 21st October, *vide* page 5900):

Clause 23—

Section 88 of the principal Act is amended by inserting in sub-section (1) after the words "otherwise than in accordance with the terms of his agreement" the words "or the provisions of this Act."

House of Representatives' Amendment.—Omit the clause and insert the following new clause:—

"23. Section 88 of the principal Act is repealed, and the following section inserted in its stead:—

"88. (1) If any seaman, employed on a ship registered in Australia, is discharged—

- (a) elsewhere than at the port of discharge specified in his agreement;
- (b) otherwise than in accordance with the terms of his agreement or the provisions of this Act;
- (c) without fault on his part justifying his discharge; and
- (d) without his consent,

the provisions of sub-sections (5) and (6) of section 50 of this Act shall apply as if the seaman had been discharged in pursuance of sub-section (3) of that section."

Senate's Message.—Amendment disagreed to, and the following consequential amendments made in the clause:—

After "amended," line 1, insert ". . . (a)"; and at end of clause add "; and

- (b) by omitting from sub-section (2) thereof the words 'the master or owner shall provide him with a passage to that port or such other port as is mutually agreed to with the approval of the proper authority' and inserting in their stead the words 'the provisions of sub-sections (5) and (6) of section 50 of this Act shall also apply as if the seaman had been discharged in pursuance of sub-section (3) of that section.'"

Mr. GREENE (Richmond—Minister for Trade and Customs) [3.18].—I move—

That the amendment be not insisted on, and that the amendments made in the original clause by the Senate be agreed to.

Honorable members will recollect that we forwarded to the other branch of the Legislature twenty-one amendments to this Bill. The amendment which we made in clause 23 referred to certain privileges which the seamen were to obtain if they were discharged prior to the termination of their agreement. But we made that amendment in such a way that inadvertently it deprived them of those advantages if they were discharged at the end of their agreement at other

than their home ports. That was not the intention of the Committee. Our intention was to give them exactly the same advantages if they were discharged prior to the termination of their agreement, at other than their home ports as they would obtain if they were discharged at the end of their agreement. All that the Senate's amendment does, therefore, is to give effect to the intention of this Committee.

Motion agreed to.

Clause 33A—

House of Representatives' Amendment.—After clause 33 insert the following new clause—

"33A. Section 135 of the principal Act is amended by adding the following paragraph:—

- (e) make provision, where such can be provided without detriment to the safe navigation of the ship, for a wheelhouse or, if such is not practicable, such temporary shelter as may be prescribed."

Senate's Message.—Amendment agreed to, with the following amendments:—

- (a) the omission of the words "adding the following paragraph:—' (c) '" and the insertion in their stead of the words "inserting therein after paragraph (a) the following paragraph:—' (aa) '" ; and
- (b) the insertion, after the word "prescribed" of the word "; and"

Mr. GREENE (Richmond—Minister for Trade and Customs) [3.19].—I move—

That the Senate's amendments be agreed to. The amendment made by this Committee in section 135 of the principal Act provided for the equipment of steamships operating on the coast with a wheelhouse to protect the man at the wheel from the weather. But it made that portion of the vessel's equipment appear as an alternative, whereas in truth it was an addition.

Motion agreed to.

Resolutions reported; report adopted.

CUSTOMS BILL.

SECOND READING.

Mr. GREENE (Richmond—Minister for Trade and Customs) [3.21].—I move—

That this Bill be now read a second time.

If honorable members will glance at the Bill, which has been circulated for some time, they will see that it is confined to one subject only. The honorable member for Flinders (Mr. Bruce) and other

honorable members have drawn attention on several occasions to the difficulties which importers were experiencing in dealing with goods from various countries, but particularly France and Italy, which had a depreciated exchange position. They have also drawn attention to the fact that the Customs Department, collecting duty—and carrying out the law as we believe it to be—at the mint par rate of exchange on the value of the invoice in the currency of the country from which the goods came, were thereby making it practically impossible for those countries to trade with us under existing conditions. I propose this afternoon to try to set out, in regard to a subject which is somewhat complex, but as clearly as I can, the principles upon which the Bill is framed, and the reason that it has taken the particular shape, which honorable members will see is somewhat new in Customs procedure. I think I shall be able to show that, owing to the abnormal condition of affairs which exists, we must apply a somewhat abnormal remedy. It may assist honorable members somewhat to appreciate both the reasons for the introduction of the Bill and the form of the Bill itself, if I set out briefly the broad principles underlying the theory of the foreign exchanges, and the causes that have led to the present abnormal condition of affairs. I shall then endeavour to show how we propose to get over the difficulties which these abnormal conditions present, and the reasons for the form of the Bill itself. I do not propose to weary the House with a long dissertation on the complexities of the foreign exchanges which, however interesting it might be, would probably take us a long way from the consideration of the particular subject before us. I shall confine myself as much as possible to the broad principles of the matter, and show why the Bill has been presented in this form. Let me state the position as it exists to-day in comparison with pre-war days, when the exchange position, generally speaking, was normal. Taking the three countries, France, Italy, and Belgium—

Mr. TUDOR.—Do you mean by themselves, or as compared with Great Britain.

Mr. GREENE.—I am comparing the currency of those countries with our sterling currency, and the figures I am giving are for sight bills drawn on

London. The pre-war par rate of exchange on London per £1 sterling was: France, 25.23 francs; Italy, 25.23 lire; and Belgium, 25.23 francs. To-day the rate of exchange on London for the £1 sterling—I got these rates from the Commonwealth Bank yesterday, so that, presumably, they are up-to-date—for sight bills is:—France, 52.85 francs; Italy, 89 lire; and Belgium, 52.85 francs. For reasons which I shall give directly, the rate of exchange in pre-war days never varied very much above or below par between London and those countries which practically, for purposes of international exchange, traded on a gold basis. That is why I have given the par rates of exchange. It was not necessary for my purpose to state the exchange on any particular day. It is sufficient to say that, for reasons which I shall give later, the exchange rates never varied very much above or below par in pre-war days. Consequently we can say that, speaking broadly, in pre-war days £100 worth of English bills on France could be exchanged for 2,523 francs worth of French bills on London, the same number of lire on Italy, and the same number of francs on Belgium. To-day £100 worth of English bills on France can be exchanged for 5,285 francs worth of French bills on London, 8,900 lire worth in the case of Italy, and 5,285 francs worth in the case of Belgium. It will be readily seen that, presuming—this is a presumption, and I am not stating it as a fact—that the relative increase in the cost of manufacture, such as the rates of wages, raw material, cost of coal, plant, &c., has been the same in England and France, all other things being equal, if to-day for some reason or other a French merchant wished to exchange £100 worth of British goods for identical French goods, he would have, at the present rate of exchange, to ship more than double the amount of French goods, if there was to be an equality in the two bills of exchange drawn as between the two countries. That is the position to-day, presuming that the cost of the articles had risen proportionately in both countries.

Mr. TUDOR.—Taking, for instance, French silks and British heavy woollens?

Mr. GREENE.—I was taking absolutely identical goods. If France and England, for instance, were both making blankets of the same weight and using

the same class of wool, presuming that all things were equal, if Paris drew a bill on London, and London drew a bill on Paris, as between different importers, the French importer importing British blankets and the British importer importing French blankets, you would have to get twice as many blankets from France if the two bills were to balance. I shall show directly why this equality does not exist in reality, and I hope to show also how and why the inequality is not necessarily co-extensive with the variation in the rates of exchange, even when full allowance is made for the purchase of raw material abroad by a country whose exchanges are adverse to it. When I deal with the question of raw material, as I must later, I shall show to what extent the raw material, which is being bought by France and every other country with an adverse exchange position, must necessarily cost it more in the currency of that country, as compared with sterling, than it is costing British manufacturers. But I shall also be able to show, I think, that, owing to the fact that these countries are establishing long-dated credits for the purchase of raw material at the present time, this does not enter into the calculations to anything like so great an extent as might be otherwise anticipated.

Mr. TUDOR.—But it will do so in the event of the exchange being the same when the amount is due, as it is to-day.

Mr. GREENE.—Yes, if it is; but those credits vary from three to five, and up to seven years, and, of course, we hope that long before those credits become due and payable, the French position, and the exchange position generally, will, if not quite normal, more closely approximate to normal than it does to-day.

I should like to say this before passing on: it has been said over and over again in the press that the exchange position in which France and other countries find themselves makes it difficult for them to trade. I do not believe for a moment that that is so; because, if the exchange position of France and other countries with a depreciated exchange be made more difficult, it necessarily follows that a country with an appreciated exchange position, as America, for instance, will have its position made easy for it; if it be difficult for France to-day, under the existing exchange position, to trade, then,

with an appreciated exchange, it must be necessarily more easy. Of course, that is absurd. In the case of America, while before the war, £100 would buy 486 dollars worth of goods, to-day £100 will buy only 343 dollars worth.

I wish to turn for a moment or two to a consideration of the position in those days which now seem so far removed, when the rivalry of nations was practically confined to trade, and the only battlefield on which they met was the field of commerce. Exactly the same procedure which takes place in any ordered state of society between individuals, or groups of individuals, in the buying or exchanging of goods, services, or products, takes place as between nations; that is to say, it is carried on very largely on the same principle. The only difference is found in the distance, variations of currency, the magnitude of the transaction, the time elapsing between points when exchanges can be balanced; and all these make the transactions more complex and a little more difficult to follow. It is common to talk of the balance of trade, and point to the export and import figures, which relate only and entirely to goods as if they formed the totality of what constitutes the financial relationships of nations to one another. Of course, there are many things which go to make up the credit and debit sides of the balance-sheet between nations. Besides the debts and credits for goods—that is, the visible exports and imports—there are the invisible exports and imports of every country, such as national securities, coupons, the hundred and one monetary transactions of a private nature—such as the sale of stocks, bonds, and monetary transactions of all sorts which take place between individuals—and all have their place in and effect on the international exchange position. Then, above and beyond this, we must not forget what I might term the export and import of services rendered, which equally play their part in the balance of international figures. For instance, there is Britain in her capacity as the world's sea-carrier. Probably the tremendous amount of work which Britain does for the nations of the world as the international sea-carrier, is one of the main factors which enables Britain to overtake the balance of trade which

would otherwise be against her. If honorable members turn to statistics for quite a number of years, they will see that England has imported more than she has exported. But all these things help to balance the international exchange position. Honorable members will see, therefore, that the international or foreign exchange depends on the totality of all the debts owing and payable as between nations.

For the purposes of my argument, it is not necessary to deal with the influence that the time at which future debts fall due has on the rate of exchange at any particular moment. Students of foreign exchange know well that the balance of trade may be temporarily against any particular nation. The fact that it is well known that debts falling due within an appreciable time, will become due, will very often keep exchanges at par, when otherwise they would not be. For my purpose, it is sufficient to say that, in pre-war days, the business of buying and selling those debts between the countries of the world—which was done for the most part through London, for reasons which I need not enter into here—was carried out at rates that never varied very much, at all events, above or below the specie point. It is perfectly evident that, as with individuals, so with nations, if you buy more than you sell you must in some way balance the ledger or go insolvent—you must either draw on reserves, or borrow to meet your liabilities. Consequently, if there are more bills drawn on any given country than the country has drawn, the competition for the few by the many leads to a premium being offered. This premium can never exceed the specie point very much, because once it reaches a point where it pays better for an importer to buy gold and ship it in payment of the debt, rather than buy a bill, he will buy gold. I do not say that that actually happens; I am merely putting the position in its simplest form. We know that bills which form the subject of foreign exchange pass through quite a number of hands; but, as the simplest way, I am putting the matter as between the importer and the exporter. In pre-war days, the moment gold began to move in any appreciable quantity, the usual method of checking it was by a rise

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in the bank rate, which acted in a double way by checking trade and attracting investments from abroad. The moment the bank rate went up to a particular point, money began to flow in to take advantage of the high interest rates, and, as a consequence, exchanges were rectified. Foreign loans and the establishment of temporary credits, which were drawn against in many instances, all had the same effect of re-establishing the balance of exchange, and stopping the outflow or the inflow of gold, as the case might be. The fact is worth recalling that, although Germany was nominally a country which for international purposes traded on a gold basis, it rarely, if ever, allowed the export of gold for many years prior to the war. Frequently, when it would have paid her merchants over and over again to export gold, the Government insisted on the bank rate being raised in Berlin, and this at once brought into Germany that loose money which was always ready to take advantage of a temporary rise in the rate of interest in any quarter. In that way the outflow of gold was prevented. It was, in fact, the method Germany invariably adopted to hang on to her gold.

Nevertheless, these variations, such as they were, above or below par, as between one country and another, never varied to any great extent, and the fluctuations in the foreign exchanges were never very great of recent years as between countries whose exchange for international purposes was nominally, at all events, based on gold. With regard to silver-currency countries, of course, inasmuch as silver was in London no more than a marketable commodity, the rate of exchange between Great Britain and those countries necessarily fluctuated over and above and beyond the extent to which the balance of debts would have caused it to fluctuate as the price of silver rose or fell in London; but beyond making the calculations very much more complicated, these variations do not affect the general truth of the statement that of recent years the pre-war fluctuations in foreign rates of exchange were not marked, but ranged within a few points of the specie or gold point, either above or below. That is to say, the variation as between the mint par rate of exchange for foreign bills converted into sterling and the bank rate of exchange was never very great, and

was confined within certain well-defined limits. Thus the position in pre-war days was that the mint par rate of exchange, which never varied very much, could be taken as a fair basis of calculation, and for that reason the exchange rate had at that time practically no effect on prices, except as regards silver-currency countries.

What are the reasons which have led to the extraordinary departure from those conditions, and to the enormous gap which has arisen as between the mint par and the bank rate of exchange for foreign bills? While the mint par rate of exchange remains constant, the figures which I quoted at the beginning of my remarks show to what an enormous extent the bank rates of exchange have moved in an adverse direction against France and Italy. The causes which have led up to this position may be summarized under four principal heads—

Depreciation of the currency in certain countries;

Heavy importations of debtor countries;

Cessation of gold settlement; and

Loss of credit or confidence.

How much these respective factors have individually contributed to the general result it is impossible to say with any accuracy, but the cessation of gold movements and the loss of credit and confidence are, I believe, the greater factors, although it is probable that the principal causes will be found in the depreciation of currency and in the heavy importations by debtor countries. In any case, all four factors are so intimately related that it is a little difficult to discriminate between cause and effect. It is well known that no factor reacts on the rate of exchange as between one country and another with greater speed or more certainty than does the depreciation of the currency of one country in relation to that of another. If the currency of one country becomes depreciated in relation to another, and the balance of indebtedness sets against the former, which is almost the invariable tendency, for reasons which I need not go into now, it follows that the sum of the respective debts must balance somehow. Consequently, in settling the rate of exchange as between those two countries, whatever the extent of the depreciation of the currency of the one in relation to the other may be, just so much more in proportion of the debts of the one is

required to balance the debts of the other. If the French currency be depreciated 25 per cent., and the British currency remains at par, France is obliged to find 25 per cent. more than the equivalent value in francs at their par value to settle the exchanges. In other words, provided gold is free to move—and that is the point I wish honorable members to keep in mind—the depreciation of the currency of a country can always be measured by the amount at which gold stands at a premium there. I am not taking into consideration the actual cost of the movement of gold, which arises from other causes, and need not be calculated for the purposes of my argument.

Nothing contributes to the depreciation of the currency of any country as does the overissue of paper money, which is either not at all or not readily convertible into gold. We all know that this has been going on at a great rate in Europe for some years past.

Mr. TUDOR.—Colonel Onslow says that it has been going on here at a great rate.

Mr. GREENE.—I shall deal with that particular phase of the question in a moment. We do not, perhaps, realize the extent of the issue of paper money in Europe. At the outbreak of war the maximum note issue of the Bank of France, as fixed by law, was 6,800,000,000 francs. On the 5th August, 1914, immediately, after the war broke out, the maximum was raised to 12,000,000,000 francs, and on successive occasions it was further increased until on the 17th July, 1919, the maximum was fixed at 40,000,000,000 francs. As a matter of fact, at the end of 1913 the actual amount of paper money issued by the Bank of France was 238,015,520 francs. By 1920 that amount had risen to 38,355,755,000 francs. In Italy, State notes and bank notes together, at the end of 1913, amounted to 2,772,578,545 lire; to-day the amount is 13,874,254,775 lire. In Belgium in 1914, the note issue amounted to 958,021,000 francs. To-day it is 4,991,765,000 francs. We talk about the increase of the Australian note issue, but it must be admitted that, in comparison with the French and Belgium figures, notwithstanding the enormous pressure upon, and temptation to, the Treasury to issue paper money, our note issue has been managed with consummate skill. I obtained from the Commonwealth Statistician to-day some figures which show the

gold reserves behind these enormous note issues. The Bank of France has issued £1,500,000,000 worth of notes, whilst the cash reserves of the bank amount to £223,000,000. That reserve is against the whole of the bank's liabilities. The note issue of the three banks of issue in Italy, viz., the Bank of Italy, the Bank of Sicily, and the Bank of Naples, in September, 1919, was £560,000,000, and the cash reserve amounted to £87,000,000. There was also £90,000,000 worth of Treasury notes. I am unable to say whether there was any gold reserve against them, but as the statistics given by the Supreme Economic Council do not quote any gold reserve, I think I am safe in assuming that there is none. Having regard to the comparative smallness of our note issue, and the fact that it has a gold backing of nearly 50 per cent., which puts into the shade the reserves behind the note issues of other countries, it can have little effect upon the currency position, and is, in comparison with the others, perfectly sound. I do not believe for a moment that our note issue has led to any depreciation of our currency.

Mr. TUDOR.—It may have had other effects.

Mr. GREENE.—I do not believe it has. In proportion to the other figures I have quoted, our note issue hardly represents more than a streamlet flowing into a mighty torrent. I have very little doubt that the actual currency of the other countries I have quoted has, by reason of the huge note issues, been depreciated in relation to Great Britain. I shall quote just one other example of what has been taking place in Europe. From what we are able to learn, Russia has been using the printing press, and turning out notes with the characteristic recklessness that has distinguished every phase of the Bolshevik Administration. What is the result? Not only has the Russian currency no value whatever amongst the civilized nations of the earth, but even in Russia itself, all goods have risen in the value of the currency of the country to an extent that is simply grotesque. One could quote instance after instance of what has been written of the prices paid for goods in the currency of Russia, owing entirely to the fact that there has been an enormous over-issue of paper money, which has depreciated the currency until it has practi-

cally no value at all. I have quoted these illustrations, because the fact of the matter is that goods, or services, or whatever is saleable, or becomes the subject of an exchange in any country which has a depreciated currency, must sooner or later adjust themselves in price to the same extent as the measure of their value is itself altered. To whatever extent currency becomes depreciated, prices must increase in proportion. Assuming that the effect of the note issue in France, Italy, and elsewhere has been to bring about a depreciation of the currency of those countries, prices must rise in proportion. As we have seen, the extent to which gold advances to a premium, invariably measures the extent of the depreciation of the currency.

Mr. JOWETT.—Does the Minister say that that is the cause of the rise of prices in Australia?

Mr. GREENE.—I have already said that I do not believe that is the cause of high prices in Australia. What I am endeavouring to show is that, assuming that there is a depreciation of currency, prices will rise accordingly, and the price of that depreciation is necessarily the extent to which gold is at a premium, provided that the movement of gold is free and the premium can be ascertained. The invariable tendency with a country whose currency is depreciated is to become a debtor country. That is to say, through the inherent causes which bring about depreciation of its currency, the tendency is for imports to exceed exports, and inasmuch as the balance of the exchanges is against the debtor country, we at once get a prohibition of the export of gold. It will be found that in every case, without exception, where there is a depreciated currency there is an embargo on the export of gold, although, of course, embargoes have been put on the export of gold for other reasons in other countries. At once we get a new factor in the exchange situation, the nature and extent of which it is impossible to place limits upon. So long as the supply of bills drawn on such a debtor country largely exceeds the supplies of bills from that country drawn on other countries, so long will the rate of exchange, already made adverse by the depreciation of the currency, be still further pushed in an adverse direction, the extent of which will be determined only by the extent

to which the debts owing exceed the debts owed and the urgency of their settlement. That is to say with the prohibition upon the export of gold the balance of the exchange rate being against the country, the result is there is an enormous competition for bills, for debts owing to the country, leading to a depreciation of the exchanges, to which there is practically no limit, and which can only be measured by the urgency and the nature of the settlements to be effected. I should like to quote an authority in support of the statements I have just made, because this is a complex and difficult subject, upon which one does not like to dogmatize. My authority is one whose views I am sure will commend themselves to honorable members, because his reputation has for a long time stood very high indeed in regard to matters relating to international finance. I refer to the late Lord Goschen. In his work, *The Theory of the Foreign Exchanges*, 1903 edition, pages 69 to 72, will be found the following. I have omitted from the quotation certain words that are irrelevant and unnecessary for the purposes of my argument, but if any honorable member cares to look up the reference he will find I have omitted nothing which in any way alters the sense of the text. Lord Goschen says—

The examination of the nature and tendency of the fluctuations just described serves to lead us conclusively enough to their limits, which is the special object of our present investigation. The bills on a given country fluctuate in value, in proportion to the extent to which the prices of all purchasable articles—bullion included—are affected by the depreciation of the currency; in other words, in proportion to the discount of the paper money, or the premium on gold. Beyond that proportion the fact of the depreciation of the currency cannot cause them to deviate. . . .

This is where we get to the exact position as it is to-day, namely, a country with a depreciated currency and the prohibition of the export of gold.

What, however, will be the case if the export of bullion from the country where the depreciated currency exists is prohibited?

How is the holder of a claim on such a country to encash that which is due to him?

If, as is often the case, debtors are bound at any cost to place funds in English money into the hands of their creditors by a given day, there would be no limit to the price which might be exacted from them—in other words, no limit to the fluctuations in the exchange.

Supply and demand alone determine the price. And if the exports of such a country

do not equal the imports (and this is by far the most general case), so that the demand for bills to pay for the imports exceeds the quantity of bills which is supplied by the exports, the balance which the country has to pay can only be settled by an enormous sacrifice.

From certain parts of the quotation, as it appears on page 72, I have substituted the word “debtors” for a phrase used by Viscount Goschen, not because of any altered sense, but because the phrase, as it appears in the work, would not convey any meaning to honorable members. I do not suggest, of course, that I understand the exchange position any more than does any other honorable member. I have substituted the word “debtors” because the phrase to which I refer relates to something which I have omitted, and, therefore, if retained in the quotation, it would not convey any meaning to honorable members. If honorable members have been following me they must realize that whilst we have here a factor which exerts an immense influence on the rates of exchange, it is not one, and this is the important point, which necessarily must be reflected in the price of goods. In regard to the depreciation of the currency itself, the measure of it must be reflected in the price of goods. Lord Goschen says in the first part of the quotation I gave—

Beyond that proportion the fact of the depreciation—

That is, the premium on gold—

of the currency cannot cause them to deviate.

This difference in the exchange position is in proportion to the extent to which the price of articles, bills included, are affected by a depreciated currency. But when you come to the other side of the question, the influence which the actual prohibition of the export of gold has on the exchanges, you are touching a factor which, though it has immense influence on the exchange position, need not necessarily be reflected in the price of commodities in the country from which those goods are exported. There is no doubt that this factor, this influence upon the exchanges of which I have just been speaking, is being felt to a large extent in the exchange position to-day. During the war European countries financed themselves by borrowing very largely abroad to pay for the enormous importation of goods of one sort and another that were used throughout the war. Their own

source of production being cut off, they naturally had to import and exchanges were balanced by the export of securities. Since the termination of the war the dislocation of their trade, and their lack of exports, combined with the heavy importations of coupons—the results of foreign debts incurred during the war—food and raw materials, throw a still heavier balance of trade against them, which they find it more difficult to meet, whilst the high rates of interest and the difficulty of getting credit abroad make their position more and more serious. The consequence has been the advance of the exchange rates to a figure probably far in excess of any that depreciation of the various currencies would have effected by and of themselves. The exchange rates to-day are not due entirely to the depreciation of the currency, but to that plus other influences, of which this is one.

I desire now to pass on to another factor, the fourth of the four which I have enumerated. I refer to the matter of the loss of credit and confidence. I believe that the disturbed state of Europe has a great deal to do with the present exchange rates. This, again, is an influence which need not necessarily be reflected in the price of goods in those countries where there is a depreciated currency when those goods come to be exported. I will quote one more reference from the work of Viscount Goschen, to which I have alluded. Upon page 123 will be found the following words, addressed, in effect, to the student of foreign exchange—

So, too, he will not forget the influence of credit or discredit, and at any time of panic or other temporary derangement of confidence, the discount at which bills are sold will not be mistaken for the result of an adverse balance of trade or a depreciated currency.

I came upon a notable example of this in the *Melbourne Herald*, when the following paragraph was reported on the 11th inst., being a quotation from the *Times* of the day previously:—

There has been a fall in the value of Italian securities, in consequence of the decision of the Fiat Motor Company to close its workshops, on the grounds that the scheme of co-operation as advocated by the Government, is impossible. The lira is now quoted at 90 to the £1, compared with 35 to the £1 a year ago.

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The month before that day exchange with Italy stood at 72 lire to the £1. In the course of a few days it had risen to 81 lire; and, when this fall in value of Italian securities occurred the rate went up to 90. These decided influences in the present exchange position in Europe, I emphasize, need not necessarily be reflected in the price of goods in that country where the goods are produced. For instance, in Italy when, owing to the action of the Communists, the exchange rates went from 72 to 90 lire in a month, the goods which Italy had for sale did not thereby cost so much more to produce. Still, owing to the fall in the international value of the lira, every £1 would buy 90 lire instead of 72. So long as the root causes of the present position remain unchanged, so long will foreign exchanges remain in their present unsatisfactory state; and, not until there is a substantial reduction in the redundant paper issues, a growth of exports from the countries with an adverse balance of trade, and the possibility of free gold movements being re-established, can we expect to see that renewal of confidence which will lead to the removal of those causes which, acting and reacting upon one another, are responsible for the present unhealthy position. However that may be, it is important for us to realize that, apart from the causes which under normal conditions would lead to fluctuations in exchange rates, apart from the variations caused by depreciated currencies, there are potent factors at work which are exercising very great influence on the exchange rates, which—I repeat—need not necessarily be reflected in the prices of goods produced in the country. In other words, while depreciation of currency does not make it any easier for a country to sell its goods, any further movement of the exchange in an unfavorable direction makes it possible for that country to sell its goods at prices below those of its competitors. I want to interpolate here that what I have said in relation to these two last factors—namely, the influence upon exchange of the prohibition of export of gold and the loss of credit, and that these factors need not necessarily be reflected in the price of goods—is entirely true, I believe, in relation to goods manufactured entirely from the raw products of a country which, for

our purpose, we will suppose, is exporting its goods in those circumstances. But it is not entirely true in regard to that country if it is importing the raw materials for its manufactures. At the same time, it is to be remembered that this difficulty has been overcome, to a very large extent, by the establishment of credits abroad.

I have endeavoured briefly to trace the main considerations which account for normal fluctuations in exchange rates in normal times, and the principal factors which have contributed to the acutely marked adverse position of the international relationships of certain countries and the violent fluctuations of foreign exchange rates at the present time. And I have tried, as far as possible, to steer clear of the by-ways and to stick to the high road. But, if honorable members have been able to follow me, they will have seen that such fluctuations as took place in normal circumstances in pre-war days were so small that, with the exception of silver currency countries—and then only in the event of an abnormal move in the price of silver—they had no material effect upon prices at all. But when one comes to the question of buying and selling to-day, the exchange position makes an enormous difference. I have endeavoured to show that, beside the factor of depreciated currency, the full extent of which must be reflected in the cost of commodities, there are other powerful agencies which play a material part in the adverse exchange position of countries whose currency is depreciated, but which need not necessarily be reflected in those countries in the cost of commodities at all. From this fact arises the danger that advantage may be taken of the position to dump goods at prices which would make it impossible for our manufacturers, or for British manufacturers either, to compete; and it is for that reason that the Bill has been introduced in its present form.

Now I invite honorable members to turn their attentions to the Bill itself. If honorable members will refer to the Customs Act of 1901, they will find that section 154 provides—

When any duty is imposed according to value—

- (a) the value shall be taken to be the fair market value of the goods in the principal markets of the country whence the same were exported

in the usual and ordinary commercial acceptance of the term, and free on board at the port of export in such country, and a further addition of 10 per cent. on such market value.

Section 155 of the Act reads—

The genuine invoice means—

- (a) the original invoice prepared and issued by the seller in the country whence the goods were exported, showing the true description of the goods and the actual money price paid, or to be paid, for the goods by the purchaser in the country whence the same were exported, without any deduction.

Section 157 provides—

Where the genuine invoice shows the value of the goods in any currency other than British currency, the equivalent value of the goods in British currency shall be ascertained according to a fair rate of exchange to be declared in case of doubt by the Minister.

Section 154, paragraph *a*, lays down the principle of what we know as the home consumption value as being the basis upon which all *ad valorem* duties are levied. Section 155 lays down the principle that the genuine invoice must set out the actual money price of the goods in the country whence the same were exported. Section 157 relates to the rates of exchange as between the value of the goods in the currency of the country whence the goods were exported and the equivalent value of the goods in British currency. It has been held that, as the value for duty must be the home-consumption value in the country of export, the genuine invoice must set out the actual money price paid for goods in the currency of the country whence the goods were exported. Section 157 simply relates as between currency and currency to the proper rate of exchange, which in case of doubt is to be declared by the Minister. The only cases of doubt that could arise were those that related to the rate of exchange with silver countries, or to some similar cause which might lead to doubt as to the par value of exchange between currency and currency. I do not believe it was ever intended that that section should go any further. Customs Order No. 643 lays down the rates as between currency and currency.

Mr. TUDOR.—Is that a recent Order?

Mr. GREENE.—No; so far as I know, it has been in force for many years.

Mr. JOWETT.—Can the Minister say when that Order was issued?

Mr. GREENE.—I cannot. It is a very lengthy Order, which I would like included in *Hansard*, and I therefore ask, Mr. Speaker, that I may be allowed to put it in without reading the whole of it.

Mr. SPEAKER (Hon. Sir Elliot Johnson).—It will be sufficient if the Minister quotes a portion at the beginning and at the end.

Mr. GREENE.—It is as follows:—

BRITISH EQUIVALENTS OF THE CURRENCY OF COUNTRIES USING THE GOLD STANDARD.

Country.	Monetary Unit and Division.			Equivalent in pence.	Exchange for £1 stg.
Argentina	Peso	=	100 centavos..	47·58	5·04
Austria-Hungary	Crown	=	100 hellers ..	9·99	24·02
Belgium	Franc	=	100 centimes..	9·51	25·23
Bolivia	Boliviano	=	100 centavos..	19·20	12·5
Brazil	Milreis	=	1000 reis ..	26·93	8·90
British Honduras	Dollar	=	100 cents ..	49·32	4·86
Canada (except Newfoundland)	Dollar	=	100 cents ..	49·32	4·86½
Chile	Peso	=	100 centavos..	18·00	13·33
Colombia	Dollar (peso)	=	100 centavos..	49·32	4·86
Costa Rica	Colon	=	100 centimos..	22·95	10·45
Denmark	Crown (Krone)	=	100 ors ..	13·22	18·15
Ecuador	Sucre	=	100 centavos	24·00	10·00
Egypt	Pound	=	100 piastres ..	243·77	·984
Finland	Mark	=	100 penni ..	9·51	25·23
France	Franc	=	100 centimes..	9·51	25·23
German Empire	Mark	=	100 pfennige ..	11·75	20·42
Greece	Drachma	=	100 lepta ..	9·51	25·23
Haiti	Gourde	=	100 cents ..	47·58	5·04
Holland	Florin	=	100 cents ..	19·82	12·10
India	Rupee	=	16 annas ..	16·00	15·00
Italy	Lira	=	100 centesimi	9·51	25·23
Japan	Yen	=	100 sen ..	24·58	9·76
Korea	Won	=	100 chon ..	24·58	9·76
Mexico	Dollar (peso)	=	100 cents ..	24·58	9·76
Newfoundland	Dollar	=	100 cents ..	50·00	4·80
Norway	Crown (Krone)	=	100 ore ..	13·22	18·15
Panama	Balboa	=	100 cents ..	49·32	4·86
Philippines	Peso	=	100 centavos..	24·66	9·73
Peru	Libra	=	10 soles ..	240·00	1·00
Portugal	Milreis	=	1000 reis ..	53·28	4·50
Roumania	Lei	=	100 bani ..	9·51	25·23
Russia	Rouble	=	100 copecks ..	25·37	9·46
Spain	Peseta	=	100½ centesimos	9·51	25·23
Sweden	Crown (Krone)	=	100 ore ..	13·22	18·15
Switzerland	Franc	=	100 centimes..	9·51	25·23
Turkey	Lira (pound)	=	100 piastres ..	216·80	1·10
United States	Dollar	=	100 cents ..	49·32	4·86
Uruguay	Dollar (peso)	=	100 centesimos	51·00	4·70
Venezuela	Bolivar	=	100 centimos..	9·51	25·23

First of all, the law as it stands lays it down that we must ascertain the home consumption value, and that the genuine invoice must set out the price paid in the country of manufacture. It has been held that that means the currency of the country of manufacture. Section 157 provides that the rate of exchange as between currency and currency must be a fair rate of exchange, and that if there is any doubt the Minister must declare it. We believe that the law compels us to collect these duties to-day on the home consumption value converted at the mint par rate of exchange as be-

tween the currencies of the various countries. As honorable members know, this matter has been the subject of considerable controversy, and is now being tested in the Courts. I do not intend to discuss the subject any further; but merely to say that what we are doing is in accordance with the law. As honorable members know, we are collecting duties on the mint par rate of exchange.

Mr. TUDOR.—Not on the bank rate.

Mr. GREENE.—That is so.

Mr. JOWETT.—You regard that as compulsory.

Mr. GREENE.—Yes. If it were not so we would not be doing it. I believe two or three persons have brought actions against us, and a test case will be heard to ascertain if what we are doing is right or wrong. It is a question of an interpretation of the law. This practice has led to some extraordinary results, and there is no doubt that duties now being collected on some goods makes it absolutely impossible to profitably sell them. When speaking on this subject on a former occasion I stated that manufacturers of those classes of goods for which there is a world demand have raised the home consumption value of their goods in the currency of their country to the world's parity converted at the bank rate of exchange. In other words, French, Italian and other manufacturers are demanding and receiving the world's parity for their goods in their home market. When they sell to Australia and we commence collecting duty on their goods, and, in the case of France, converting their bills into francs at the mint par rate of exchange, and these goods come into competition with other goods sold at the world's parity, and in regard to which we are collecting the duty at par, the procedure simply puts them out of court. This Bill is an attempt to remedy that. It is also an attempt to prevent the exporters of France and Italy, when the world demand for their goods may be not quite what it is to-day, using the exchange position to dump these goods in our market at prices at which neither British nor other manufacturers could compete.

I have taken so much trouble to state the causes of the exchange position, and to discriminate as far as possible regarding the influence of these causes, because I wish to show that it is possible to use an exchange position for the dumping of goods should it be thought desirable to do so. I have endeavoured to show that, whatever the depreciation of a currency, it must be reflected in the price of goods exported from the country where it exists; but there are other influences, potent factors in the existing exchange position, which need not necessarily be reflected in those prices, of which it will eventually be possible for such countries to take advantage, if they so desire, unless, of course, in the meantime, the exchange position drifts

back to its normal pre-war state. If, as is quite possible, the tendency be for prices to fall suddenly, these countries can use their exchange position to dump their goods in Great Britain and in Australia.

Our fiscal policy rests on two principles, namely, preference to British goods and protection of Australian manufactures. I should be false to the principles in which I believe, and the Government would be unfaithful to the promises which it has made to the country, if the Bill enabled countries in an adverse exchange position to take advantage of it by dumping their goods into Australia without any safeguard or protection at all.

Mr. BRUCE.—I think you have stuck to your principles pretty firmly.

Mr. GREENE.—If honorable members will turn to the Bill, they will see that we take advantage of the existence of the Board of Trade to provide for the reviewing of the position, and clothe that body with the powers of a Royal Commission, because it may be necessary that it shall get at the truth of particular representations, an extremely difficult, if not impossible, thing to do by only the ordinary forms of inquiry.

Mr. RICHARD FOSTER.—Is the Board of Trade a body of officials?

Mr. GREENE.—The Board of Trade is not composed of officials, though there are officials on it. Its members are Senator Russell, the Vice-President of the Executive Council; Mr. Herbert Brookes, the representative of the Associated Chambers of Manufactures; Mr. J. M. Elder, the representative of the Associated Chambers of Commerce—

Mr. GREGORY.—Was not the Board created during the war for certain purposes?

Mr. GREENE.—We used it during the war, and have also used it since the war for various investigations which we have desired to carry out. Then there is Mr. Reading—

Mr. TUDOR.—He is the B.A.T.C. man?

Mr. GREENE.—Yes. He comes from Sydney. There are also Mr. C. J. McRae, the President of the Primary Producers' Union; Mr. Stirling Taylor, the Director of the Bureau of Commerce

and Industry; the Acting Comptroller-General of Customs, Mr. Percy Whitton, and myself.

Mr. FLEMING.—An exceptionally able body of men.

Mr. TUDOR.—All from one side. No worker need apply!

Mr. GREENE.—The particular business with which the Board will be concerned is the ascertaining of facts. Having ascertained the facts of the case, the Board will be asked to make recommendations to the Minister. I direct the attention of the House to clause 4, which provides for the insertion in the principal Act of the following provision:—

When the bank rate of exchange of any country is more than 10 per centum—

I have taken 10 per cent. because that, I think it will be generally admitted, will cover the specie point—

below the mint par rate of exchange, the Minister shall refer to the Board the question whether the bank rate of exchange should be used as the basis of the computation of the value for duty of goods imported from that country.

(2.) Upon receipt of a reference made in pursuance of the last preceding sub-section, the Board may recommend to the Minister that the bank rate of exchange be used as the basis of the computation of the value for duty of goods imported from the country specified in the reference:

Provided that the Board shall not make a recommendation under this sub-section which, if adopted, would, in its opinion, be prejudicial to—

(a) the manufacture of goods in Australia or the sale in Australia of those goods; or

(b) any preference given to goods imported from the United Kingdom.

All the facts, so far as it is possible to give them, will be put before the Board of Trade.

Mr. RICHARD FOSTER.—And its determinations will be determinations of fact, not of policy.

Mr. GREENE.—The question for it will be, What are the facts?

Sir ROBERT BEST.—Why do you say, "When the bank rate of exchange is more than 10 per cent. below the mint par rate of exchange"? Why not say "above or below"?

Mr. GREENE.—The honorable member has in his mind the position of countries with an appreciated exchange.

Mr. TUDOR.—America and Japan.

Sir ROBERT BEST.—Certainly. I hold that you should say "above or below."

Mr. GREENE.—If honorable members desire that alteration, I shall not object to it.

Mr. TUDOR.—Is not this the procedure of the Customs Department, that, instead of charging on the dollar as at, say, 3.87, it charges on it as at 4.87, so that nothing is lost in duty?

Sir ROBERT BEST.—Under the present arrangement we lose about £1,000,000 in duty.

Mr. GREENE.—America, with her appreciated exchange, has her own peculiar difficulties in regard to her exports, which are very real. What would happen if effect were given to the suggestion of the honorable member for Koo-yong, and the Board of Trade were to recommend that duty should be charged on the bank rate of exchange so far as exports from America were concerned? I think the result would be that American goods would be shut out of this market, or that American goods would be much in the same position as are French and Italian goods to-day when duty is charged on the mint par rate of exchange. Probably, however, the Board, after taking into consideration all the facts would recommend that things be left *in statu quo*. I have no objection to the alteration should it be generally desired, though I do not think that it would have any appreciable result.

Power is taken in the Bill to allow the Board of Trade to review the position from time to time, because anything may happen. There have been three very decided moves in the appreciation of the German mark, the last one a pretty big one, bringing it up at one jump almost a third in value, though there is still room for great improvement. As the exports of these countries tend to balance the exchange position, it may be necessary for the Board of Trade to move pretty rapidly at any particular time. That is one of the reasons why we propose to make use of a body, such as the Board of Trade, which can get together rapidly, and which can consider the whole position as it presents itself at the time.

Mr. BRUCE.—Under this Bill will the members of the Board be able to move only in respect of the basis of computation of the value for duty of all imports from a country, or will they be able to deal with any specific item?

Mr. GREENE.—They will have to look at a country's position, by and large, and if they decide that the bank rate of exchange can be adopted without any general detriment, either to Australian industry or to British industry, they will be able to grant it by means of their certificates. Later on in the measure, power is given them to deal with any particular class of goods.

Mr. BRUCE.—To revoke upon an item?

Mr. GREENE.—They will be able to, revoke in regard to any country as a whole. It is quite possible, indeed I think it is probable—that after a certificate has been granted in regard to a country as a whole, it will be found that there is some particular class of goods which it is desirable to draw back upon, and in respect of which that country is taking advantage of the exchange position to do a bit of dumping. There may be instances of that sort. As soon as they are able, after granting the original certificate, to review the whole position, and to ascertain if any classes of goods are coming in at lower rates, or that the certificate will enable them to come in at those rates, the Board may meet and determine, in regard to those classes of goods, that the mint par rate of exchange, and not the bank rate of exchange, shall apply.

Mr. BRUCE.—But in the first instance they will look at the position of the country generally?

Mr. GREENE.—It is difficult to speak for the Board as a whole. But that is the intention of the Bill. It is intended that the situation as it exists in regard to the whole of the range of importation shall be reviewed. If it be found that that is the general position, the Board can then say that the bank rate of exchange shall apply in regard to the whole range of importations, and after it has granted its certificate, it can proceed to pull up particular items.

Sir ROBERT BEST.—The general position is subject to the qualifications imposed by proposed new section 157D in regard to any particular description of goods?

Mr. GREENE.—Yes. By these means we shall endeavour to meet the abnormal exchange position which exists to-day, and at the same time to observe the principle of granting a preference to British

goods, and affording protection to Australian industries.

Debate (on motion by Mr. TUDOR) adjourned.

TREATY OF PEACE (GERMANY) BILL.

SECOND READING.

Mr. HUGHES (Bendigo—Prime Minister and Attorney-General) [4.52].—This is a Bill to extend the Treaty of Peace Act to which this Parliament has assented, to the Territories taken over under the Mandates. Inadvertently in the drafting Bill, the Peace Treaty was not extended to those Territories, and this is a measure which is designed to repair that omission. There is no new principle involved, and I do not think that I can give the House any information which is not already within the possession of honorable members. I shall, however, be very glad to make such information available to them as is in my possession. But the measure is merely intended to effect what I have already indicated, and, therefore, I move without further comment—

That this Bill be now read a second time.

Mr. WIENHOLT (Moreton) [4.53].—There is just one matter that I wish to mention at this stage. I desire to know exactly when the war will end, so far as the Commonwealth is concerned, and whether we can fix a date for its termination by any amendment in this Bill?

Mr. HUGHES.—That matter is not affected by this Bill, but will be affected by the next measure upon the business-paper.

Mr. WIENHOLT.—Very well.

Mr. MATHEWS.—Does the Bill refer to the Territories previously possessed by the Commonwealth, or to the new Territories which it has acquired under mandate?

Mr. HUGHES.—To the new Territories. Question resolved in the affirmative.

Bill read a second time, and reported from Committee without amendment; report adopted.

Motion (by Mr. HUGHES) proposed—

That the Standing Orders be suspended to enable the remaining stages to be passed without delay.

Mr. BRENNAN (Batman) [4.55].—I did not have the opportunity of hearing the Prime Minister's remarks upon

the motion for the second reading of this Bill.

Sir ROBERT BEST.—He delivered a most eloquent speech.

Mr. BRENNAN.—It was most eloquent, but it was also unusually brief. The measure is one of some importance, dealing as it does with our international relations, and the effect of the Peace Treaty upon our mandated Territories. I suggest, therefore, not as the leader of a party, but in my own right, that the third reading of the measure may well be postponed till to-morrow.

Mr. HUGHES.—If there were any principle involved in it I should be only too pleased to adopt that course.

Mr. BRENNAN.—Would the right honorable gentleman mind telling us shortly what is the object of the Bill?

Mr. HUGHES.—I have already had the honour of explaining its provisions to the House. It is merely intended to extend the Peace Treaty to the new Territories.

Mr. BRENNAN.—Then I suppose that it is useless for me to plead my ignorance.

Question resolved in the affirmative.

Bill read a third time.

TREATIES OF PEACE (AUSTRIA AND BULGARIA) BILL.

SECOND READING:

Mr. HUGHES (Bendigo—Prime Minister and Attorney-General) [4.57].—I move—

That this Bill be now read a second time. It will be within the recollection of honorable members that the Treaty of Peace with Germany did not put an end to a state of war with the other belligerent countries.

Mr. GABB.—I beg to draw attention to the state of the House. [*Quorum formed.*]

Mr. HUGHES.—It, therefore, became necessary that separate Treaties of Peace should be made with the other Powers with whom the Allied and Associated Powers had been at war. Treaties were made at different times with Austria and Bulgaria. The terms of those Treaties have been duly laid upon the table of the House, and, doubtless honorable members are thoroughly acquainted with them. This Bill is intended to give effect, so far as the Commonwealth is concerned, to those Treaties, and for that purpose only.

Honorable members will note that the omission to which I referred in a previous measure has been repaired in this, so that the Act applies to the Territories under the authority of the Commonwealth as well as to the Commonwealth proper. It would serve no useful purpose to expatiate at length on the provisions of the Treaty with Austria, or with Bulgaria, for it so happens that the interests of the Commonwealth are not directly affected by them. Austria, as it exists to-day, is a very different kind of power from that which existed in August, 1914.

Mr. TUDOR.—What is the difference between this Treaty of Peace and the Treaty with Germany?

Mr. HUGHES.—They differ profoundly. Honorable members will perhaps appreciate the difference better if I emphasize a point that was, I think, sufficiently clear during the five years of war. The war was, in effect, a war between Germany and the Allies. No doubt, Austria, Bulgaria, and Turkey were Germany's allies, but the main strength of the enemy was Germany. It was Germany, for example, that had oversea colonies; and it was Germany whose ambitions were directed towards the disruption of the British Empire, and the uprooting of that form of civilization in which we believed. Austria and Bulgaria were but pawns in her Imperial game. I had the honour of being present when the Treaty of Peace was presented to the Austrian plenipotentiaries, and there is nothing in that Treaty, so far as I know, that affects this Commonwealth as a whole in the remotest way.

Mr. GABB.—I beg to call attention to the state of the House.—[*Quorum formed.*]

Mr. HUGHES.—Whatever may have been the position that Austria occupied during the war, her position to-day is very different. There have been carved out of the former Austria no less than four nations—Hungary, Czecho-Slovakia, Austria itself, and Jugo-Slavia; while some portion, I think, but am not sure, has been ceded to certain of the Allied Powers. The purpose of this Bill is to enable us to make regulations to carry into effect the provisions of the Treaty under which Austria agrees to do certain things. We

are not concerned with any of her territorial obligations, for her territories, or the territories of those countries which are contiguous to her, are very remote from the Commonwealth. But we are concerned in her obligations with regard to repatriation, finance, and economic relations, particularly new obligations relating to enemy debts and property rights. These articles provide, *inter alia*, for the establishment of clearing offices for the settlement of debts due by or to enemy nationals, and for the retention and liquidation of enemy property. These provisions apply not only to the Austrian Treaty, but to the Bulgarian Treaty. The treaties with those two countries are grouped together under this measure, by which it is proposed to carry them into effect.

Honorable members have from time to time asked when the condition provided for in the War Precautions Act will be created, three months after which that Act will expire by effluxion of time. These are two of the Treaties to which reference is made in the Statute to which I have referred. We have not yet had before us the Treaty of Peace with Turkey, but, so far as I know, that is not covered by the War Precautions Act. Speaking subject to correction, I should say that the expiration of the War Precautions Act depends upon the ratification of the Treaties of Peace with Germany, Austria-Hungary, and Bulgaria. By passing this measure, the Commonwealth will ratify the Treaties with Austria and Bulgaria, and place itself in the same position as every other belligerent country with whom Austria and Bulgaria were at war. I know of no other matters that need explanation or emphasis, but if honorable members desire to address themselves to any point, I shall have an opportunity to deal with it when speaking in reply.

Mr. WIENHOLT (Moreton) [5.10].—I tried to follow the Prime Minister carefully, but am not sure now whether he said it was not necessary for a special Treaty to be ratified with Turkey before the War Precautions Act could lapse. Turkey is the last of the four belligerents, but, so far, no Bill has come before us to ratify peace with her. She seems at present to be in the position of a snake that has been chopped into about a dozen pieces. They have all wriggled into

different corners. There is, apparently, an Old-Turk Government in Constantinople, the Young-Turk party under Mustapha Kemal Pasha is in rebellion in Asia Minor, while Enver Pasha is supposed to be somewhere in the Caucasus, so that the prospects of securing any definite peace with Turkey at present seem rather doubtful.

Mr. HUGHES.—It is not necessary to make peace with Turkey in order to give effect to that section of the War Precautions Act to which the honorable member alludes. Turkey is not included. The powers included are—I said before that I spoke subject to correction—the German Emperor, the King and Emperor of Austria, and the King of Hungary. We have made peace with Austria and with Germany, but not with Hungary.

Mr. WIENHOLT.—That statement is not satisfactory to me regarding the particular point which I desire to bring under notice. I am doing so during the debate on this Bill, but not with any intention to “cry over spilt milk,” or to raise any contentious question which would create ill-feeling or bitter feeling amongst any sections of Australians. The matter I am interested in, and which affects a great many citizens in the electorate of Moreton whom I am in honour bound to protect, is the Commonwealth Electoral (War-time) Act, which is to expire six months after the end of the war. I wish to raise, on this measure, the question of when the period of “the end of the war” will be definitely fixed. The Prime Minister now says that it depends upon a separate Treaty with Hungary, and he even seems a little in doubt as to whether it may not also be necessary first to ratify peace with Turkey as well. He says he believes that Turkey is not included, but that he speaks subject to correction. This matter is continually hanging on, waiting for the final definite ratification of peace with all our enemies.

Mr. BRENNAN.—The War Precautions Act related only to Germany, Austria, and Hungary.

Mr. WIENHOLT.—I am not particularly concerned with the War Precautions Act at the present moment. What troubles me is the Commonwealth Electoral (War-time) Act of 1917. I am anxious that that Act shall terminate. I said both during the elections and at

other times that it should never have been passed. I was away at the Front when it was passed, but had I been here I should have made one to oppose it. However, that is not the point at issue. Will the Prime Minister give us some definite assurance in regard to the repeal of this electoral measure? Will he definitely fix a date, if possible, when it shall cease to operate, so that the people whom I represent may know where they stand? If the Prime Minister cannot see his way to do that, it may be necessary for me to ascertain whether I shall be in order in moving an amendment in the measure now before us. I should prefer, however, to see the Prime Minister fall in with my point of view, and try to assist those people to whom, I think, an injustice is being done.

Mr. TUDOR (Yarra) [5.16].—I regret that I did not hear the whole of the speech of the Prime Minister (Mr. Hughes) in moving the second reading. The honorable member for Moreton (Mr. Wienholt) has raised a point which ought to be settled as soon as possible. Apparently, it is much easier to get into a war than to have peace declared after an armistice has been signed. We, as it were, automatically enter a war, but it seems impossible now to ascertain when the War Precautions Act and other measures which, in our opinion, contain many obnoxious provisions, are to be repealed. Last week, I was asked to arrange for a deputation to wait upon the Prime Minister on the question of the Electoral (War-time) Act and the War Precautions regulations generally; but, as the no-confidence motion was then under consideration, no arrangement could be made, it not being usual for Ministers to receive deputations under the circumstances. Cannot the Prime Minister tell the honorable member for Moreton and others when we shall come to the end of the period during which these Acts shall continue to operate? If it is desirable to prevent certain persons doing certain things, let definite legislation be introduced, so that we may have an opportunity of voicing our opinion. The War Precautions Act, with its regulations, is a sort of drag-net, and may be used for purposes for which it was never intended. I say unhesitatingly that that Act and certain regulations have been used for pur-

poses that were never dreamt of when the measure received the approval of this House. I am anxious to assist in the passage of this or any other measure which will bring us nearer peace with any country, but we ought to know how long these different regulations under the War Precautions Act are to operate. The Electoral (War-time) Act disfranchises certain persons who would be prevented from voting if an election occurred in the near future. The Prime Minister knows my feeling in regard to an election; he knows that I would like to see an election for both Houses as soon as possible—I am a double-dissolution man.

Mr. BAMFORD.—You are very cold-blooded!

Mr. TUDOR.—That is not so, but I desire that the voice of the people of Australia should be heard, not only in this chamber, but in another place.

Mr. BAMFORD.—You have just heard the voice of the people.

Mr. TUDOR.—It is nearly twelve months since the people had an opportunity of expressing their opinion at an election. There was an election in Victoria last week, and my prophecy that the Nationalist party would lose, and our party gain, seats, proved absolutely correct. The Minister for the Navy (Mr. Laird Smith) told me at the time that I ought not to prophesy; and the result of the election shows that I must have been "on something good."

Mr. SPEAKER (Hon. Sir Elliot Johnson).—That point is not dealt with in the Bill.

Mr. TUDOR.—Quite so; but I desire to speak on the point raised by the honorable member for Moreton (Mr. Wienholt) in regard to certain legislation passed as a result of the war. We seem to be getting peace a little bit at a time, and the position would appear to be hopeless if the War Precautions Act and the Electoral (War-time) Act are to continue to operate until we have complete peace with Hungary and Turkey.

Mr. HUGHES.—Not Turkey. I am speaking only as a layman, and not as a lawyer.

Mr. TUDOR.—Not as the Attorney-General of the Commonwealth?

Mr. HUGHES.—I do not know where the King of Hungary is just now; he is mentioned in the Act, but I do not know where he is.

Mr. TUDOR.—If the law adviser of the Government does not know, how can laymen, like the honorable member for Moreton and myself, know?

Mr. HUGHES.—I do not say that I could not interpret the section. I say that I do not know where the King of Hungary is.

Mr. TUDOR.—I do not know any lawyer who would not profess to interpret any section of any law.

Mr. HUGHES.—Lawyers are the only people who realize how difficult it is to interpret the law; laymen interpret everything.

Mr. TUDOR.—I ask the Prime Minister, in his reply on the second reading, or at some future stage of the Bill, to give us some idea as to how long the War Precautions Act and the Electoral War-time Act are to continue in operation. May we look for their repeal in the near future, or have we to wait until this mythical King of Hungary is found?

Mr. GABB (Angas) [5.22].—I have asked several questions in regard to the continuation of the War Precautions Act, and I take this opportunity to protest against the continued operation, not only of that Act, but also of the Electoral War-time Act. I do not pit my authority against that of lawyers, but I understand that the Electoral War-time Act is not now operative, and that if there were an election to-morrow, or if there had been one even in May last, the people affected by that Act would not have been disfranchised. In my opinion, it is lowering to the dignity of Parliament to remain here week after week, and month after month, and permit the War Precautions Act to remain in force. The Prime Minister (Mr. Hughes) has jocularly said that he does not know where to find the King of Hungary; but that is not the question. The question is whether or not the Government find it convenient to continue the operation of that Act. We are not now dealing with the King of Hungary; and, in any case, it is doubtful whether we shall see another monarch in that country. Surely the Prime Minister does not suggest that we should wait until some King is appointed in Hungary? Unfortunately, the Government do not seem to desire to repeal the War Precautions Act. I do not know whether they are keeping it in operation until they can

pass legislation making permanent some of the powers they are now able to exercise; but I think that the time has arrived when it should be removed from the statute-book. No doubt the War Precautions Act is a very handy weapon which a dictator may easily use to suit his own ends. The honorable member for Dampier (Mr. Gregory), if he has not threatened, has intimated that, unless some move is made towards a repeal of the Act, he and those associated with him are prepared to do something; and now we have the honorable member for Moreton (Mr. Wienholt) intimating that he may find it necessary to submit an amendment on the present measure in reference to the Electoral War-time Act. If we are to be a Parliament worthy of the name, we ought to honour the promise made when that Act was passed. It was definitely stated then that the measure would not be used in an arbitrary way. But it has been so used; and I appeal to honorable members not to allow the Prime Minister to fool them much longer by saying that he does not know where the King of Hungary is. We ought to make a concerted move, and remove this blot on our legislation.

Mr. GREGORY (Dampier) [5.26].—I was hoping that the Prime Minister (Mr. Hughes) would let us know something definite in regard to the repeal of the War Precautions Act. The right honorable gentleman will remember that, in 1918, when an amending measure was before us, the Government were induced to agree to an amendment reducing the period of its operation from six months to three months after the Declaration of Peace. At that time almost all honorable members thought that when Peace was made with Germany the Act would automatically cease to operate three months later. I know that in the interests of good government, and the welfare of the country, certain legislation should be passed giving the Government certain powers which the war has shown to be necessary. In that legislation I am prepared to help the Government, but I think that quite sufficient time has elapsed to justify us in asking that the War Precautions Act shall cease to operate. It is not fair to ask us to allow an Act of this sort, which was

primarily introduced to give the Government special arbitrary powers during war-time, to remain any longer in force than can be avoided. There is no reason why the Electoral War-time Act should not be repealed; indeed, in my opinion, the section to which the honorable member for Moreton (Mr. Wienholt) refers, was a blunder. If the Prime Minister cannot say anything definite in regard to the War Precautions Act, he might repeal that section of the Electoral War-time Act which prevents any naturalized alien voting except under certain conditions. If the Government desire that section to remain in force they ought to introduce special legislation to that end, and allow the House to determine the matter. As I said, it is essential that new legislation should be introduced to confer certain powers on the Government, but there is no necessity to wait until the King of Hungary is found before we repeal the War Precautions Act.

Mr. RICHARD FOSTER (Wakefield) [5.29].—I am glad the honorable member for Dampier (Mr. Gregory) has raised a point on which I feel very strongly. There is no doubt that certain powers should be permanently possessed by the Government, and I hope that, before the period elapses during which the Acts referred to are to remain in operation, these powers will have been conferred by legislation.

Mr. GREGORY.—You wish to expedite that legislation?

Mr. RICHARD FOSTER.—Very much so. I desire, as soon as possible, to have a Statute that would give us the protection that every other country is finding necessary.

Mr. BRENNAN (Batman) [5.30].—This Bill, which gives the Prime Minister (Mr. Hughes) the opportunity for the repetition and republication of some of those notable phrases and pompous utterances that during the war were productive of so much mischief, has moved the honorable member for Moreton (Mr. Wienholt), and certain other honorable members, to raise the question of the permanency, or otherwise, of the War Precautions Act. If the Government were sincere in their desire to get rid of that Act it might have been removed, with all its deplorable consequences, long ago. But I hold the Government absolutely guilt-

less of any desire to repeal it, and I think it is beyond question that by the time it automatically ceases, this Government, if they last so long, will have taken good care by fresh legislation to have given effect to its most objectionable features.

Mr. TUDOR.—But it is a thousand times better to do something now so that we may have an opportunity of dealing with the whole question.

Mr. BRENNAN.—Much better. And that is the reason that the Government, instead of taking the better course, have availed themselves, as long as possible, of the technical excuse that we have not yet made peace with our late enemies. We made peace with Germany in 1918. That peace was subsequently ratified. We made peace with Austria and Bulgaria, and that peace, too, has been ratified. But peace with Hungary has not yet been ratified. Those who had hoped that three months after the expiration of the ratification of peace with Austria, the War Precautions Act would come to an end, are now met by the technical objection, which the Prime Minister advertised here a few weeks ago, that we have not yet ratified the peace with Hungary, and now he tells us cynically that he does not know where the King of Hungary is. Of course he does not.

While the second reading of this Bill has afforded the honorable member for Moreton the opportunity of raising the question of the disfranchisement of so many Australian-born representatives of the race from which he springs, I venture to point out to him that his consistent support of the Government, which imposed that iniquity upon his fellow-countrymen challenges, in a very sinister manner, the sincerity of a gentleman who now pretends to be so great a champion of their cause. I do not like to have to say it, but this seems to me so obvious a rejoinder to his expression of interest in the representatives of his race at this late hour of the day. I speak, perhaps, with greater feeling on this subject by reason of the circumstance that the men on whom this outrage was committed were men, not born in the country from which the honorable member for Moreton comes, but born in my country; that is to say, in the country in which I take a particular interest. The fact that these men, because of the blood that flowed in their

ancestors' veins and their own, were disfranchised by men who came to this country, by men who found an asylum here, as in the case of the right honorable the Prime Minister and the honorable member for Moreton, makes me entertain occasional indignation. I am glad, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that, by your indulgence, and by the indulgence of Mr. Speaker, honorable members have been permitted to discuss with generality the question of the War Precautions Act, the question of the disfranchisement of my fellow-Australians, the question of the injustices that have been perpetrated upon the people of this country by the misuse of power given to the Government in the War Precautions Act. But, having said so much, I do not wish to appear to be ignorant of the fact that the Bill has nothing to do with the War Precautions Act. It is a measure to enable the Government to pass regulations to give effect, if you please, to the Treaty with Austria and Bulgaria. It is a curious thing that while members of the party to which I belong have frequently had occasion to protest against legislation by regulation, it has always been in connexion with power to make regulations to give effect to an Act of Parliament then before the House. But in itself this Bill does not contain one single positive provision enabling the country or the House to do anything at all beyond giving the Government power to legislate by means of regulations to give effect to the Treaty of Peace with Austria and Bulgaria.

Mr. HUGHES.—Do you suggest that we should alter the peace which has been so solemnly made?

Mr. BRENNAN.—No. What I suggest is that we do not invest this Government with any further power to deal, by regulation, with our international relationships. Whenever we wish to deal with this important subject, the proper method should be by a proposal brought down for the consideration of the House.

Mr. HUGHES.—This has been here for a long while.

Mr. BRENNAN.—I know that the Treaty has been here for quite a long time, but that is not a matter for regulations; it is an instrument for the ending of the state of war. No doubt, the Treaty contains provisions open to criticism, and I have ventured to criticise them. I am content that we should end the state of

war with Austria and Bulgaria, but I am not content to give an affirmative blank cheque to this Government to pass regulations as they think fit dealing with our international affairs.

Mr. GREGORY.—But you have not objected to this power in connexion with Northern Territory Ordinances.

Mr. BRENNAN.—I hope the honorable member does not accuse me of having agreed to that course of action. I was strongly opposed to it, and spoke against it when the matter came up for consideration a short time ago.

Mr. GREGORY.—I was not aware of that.

Mr. BRENNAN.—I quite acknowledge the necessity for power in a Bill to effect by regulations to its purposes, and although this power has been grossly, gravely, and secretly misused during five or six tragic years, still I grant that the power is one which should accompany any Act of Parliament, because without it we cannot give effect to its details. But this Bill deals with international problems. Our relations with Austria and Bulgaria will, no doubt, be few and far between, but, at all events, they will be of sufficient importance, if any, to warrant their being brought before the House by Bill or resolution for consideration. If we are to affirm the principle that the Government may come down with a Bill which contains nothing whatever—and this Bill does not contain anything whatever except the power to make regulations—we shall be handing over our privileges as the representatives and custodians of the people's rights to the Government to legislate secretly by means of regulation.

Mr. GREGORY.—Do you not read clauses 2 and 3 together?

Mr. BRENNAN.—The power to make regulations relates to the Treaties.

Mr. GREGORY.—More particularly to the mandated Territories, I think.

Mr. BRENNAN.—It does not relate to the mandates at all.

Mr. GREGORY.—Clause 2 states, "This Act shall apply to the Territories under the authority of the Commonwealth."

Mr. BRENNAN.—Yes; and the Territories referred to are those Territories which we had before the mandate came under consideration at all. I doubt very much if the Bill applies to the mandated

Territories at all. I do not think it intends to.

Mr. FLEMING.—They are not specifically exempted.

Mr. BRENNAN.—The phraseology of clause 2—

This Act shall apply to Territories under the authority of the Commonwealth; is inserted in all Acts of this kind to cover the existing Territories of Norfolk Island, Papua, and the Northern Territory.

Mr. GREGORY.—But in the other Bill it includes any Territory governed by the Commonwealth under a mandate.

Mr. BRENNAN.—That is a different matter. This Bill is analogous to a measure which we passed relating to the Treaty of Peace ratified with Germany; and on that Bill I spoke, as I am endeavouring to speak now, in opposition to this unbridled exercise of the right to make secret regulations. The point I wish to emphasize, in regard to the present Bill, is that it is not a measure affirmatively dealing with certain matters, but asks for authority to pass regulations for the wide international purpose of giving effect to the Treaties which we have made with Austria and Bulgaria; and I say that the question of peace with Austria and Bulgaria, or the question of our Treaty with Germany, or, indeed, any question which affects our relationship with any country, is sufficiently important to warrant its being brought before this House by resolution or Bill. I oppose the principle contained in the Bill for this reason, and I hope it will not be accepted.

Mr. MATHEWS (Melbourne Ports) [5.45].—I cannot understand the statement of the Prime Minister, that the King of Hungary cannot be found. I believe that when the war started the Emperor of Austria was also King of Hungary. If the Allies can find the Emperor of Austria, why should they not use him as King of Hungary in order that peace with that country may be ratified? Is the statement that the Allies cannot find the King of Hungary merely a trick in order that the Government may continue the War Precautions Act?

Mr. HUGHES.—I was only quoting from the section which refers to the King of Hungary. I say there is no such King.

Some honorable members need to have their heads bored with a gimlet before they can see a joke. But I suppose the honorable member thinks that one must not make a joke about a King.

Mr. MATHEWS.—There are times when I am Scotch. What is the reason for delaying the carrying into effect of the Treaty of Peace with Hungary as well as that with Austria?

Mr. HUGHES.—The Treaty of Peace with Hungary has not yet been ratified.

Mr. MATHEWS.—I do not blame the Prime Minister for this, because he has enough sins already, but will he explain the reason why that Treaty has not been ratified?

Mr. HUGHES.—The honorable member must ask the Supreme Council. Directly that body ratifies the Treaty we shall follow the same procedure as we are adopting in regard to the Treaty with Austria and Bulgaria.

Mr. MATHEWS.—Cannot the Prime Minister inform us why the ratification of the Peace Treaty with Hungary is delayed?

Mr. HUGHES.—The Supreme Council makes the Treaty of Peace, and then submits it to the various Governments in turn, but, in effect, it is the principal powers which determine when the peace shall be ratified.

Mr. MATHEWS.—Is it not a fact that when peace was made with Austria and Germany, our two principal enemies, the war was over?

Mr. HUGHES.—Yes.

Mr. MATHEWS.—That being so, why continue in operation the War Precautions Act, so that Australia is governed under regulation instead of under legislation? The statement has been made over and over again that the Prime Minister used the War Precautions Act for purposes for which it was never intended. In 1915, when the right honorable gentleman, as Attorney-General in the Fisher Government, submitted an amending War Precautions Bill he promised his own party, after a "stone-wall" lasting over a week, that the measure would be used only for the defence of the realm. We all know that it was used for other purposes, and I cannot see why it should be continued in operation a day longer. To all intents and purposes the war is over; therefore why not repeal all that legislation which created so much ill-feeling in Australia during the war? We

shall never get back to the feeling of pre-war days until we wipe out the War Precautions Act. The country has enormous problems to face, and why not remove all causes of bitterness so that we may approach these problems as a united people? Germany was our principal enemy, yet at no distant date we shall be trading with her as other countries are already doing. What is the need for any pretence in this matter? In common with every other man, I wish to get back to the conditions of pre-war days, and to fight out political battles under the Constitution and Acts of Parliament; but the bitterness which was created by the War Precautions Act will not be removed so long as that measure remains on the statute-book.

Australians should give close consideration to the causes which brought Bulgaria into the war. That country became an opponent of the Allies through the biggest bit of blundering that international diplomacy could possibly perpetrate. Bulgaria should never have come into the war as an enemy of the Allies; but, unfortunately, there was an Economy party in Great Britain, as there is in other countries. The entry of Bulgaria on the side of Germany and Austria was one of the principal factors in prolonging the war, because if Bulgaria had not been our enemy, Servia could not have been attacked in the rear, and there could not have been a continuous line of communication between Turkey and Middle Europe. We are often told that it is a great advantage to Australia to be under the British flag; but the blundering with Bulgaria is an illustration of one of the disadvantages of being associated with the Mother Country. The Bulgarians are almost Eastern in their natures; they like a lot of glamour and show. When, like Roumania, they were uncertain as to which side they would support in the war, Germany sent plenipotentiaries extraordinary to Bulgaria to influence the feeling of the people in her favour, so that the Central Powers might get access to Turkey and be able to attack the Allies in the rear. The diplomats of Germany, in the fulness of their knowledge of the Bulgarian, sent ambassadors to Bucharest in smart motor cars and with a great amount of ostentation. They entertained the people in the

capital with champagne and turkey, and did many things to impress the Bulgarians with the idea that they were the richer and stronger power. What did Great Britain do? A British plenipotentiary was also sent, but the Government haggled as to whether they would allow him £60 or £100 for his expenses. Surely the diplomats of the Allies ought to have known that their policy was suicidal. The display made by the Germans completely won over the Bulgarian people, and the consequences were disastrous to the Allies.

Mr. BRENNAN.—Still, I suppose, the Bulgarian newspapers said that it was a war to end war and to put down might by right.

Mr. MATHEWS.—They did more than that. I know the statement I am making is correct, and the Prime Minister must know as well as I do that it would have been better for the world if Bulgaria had not become our enemy, and that it was only through the blundering of Allied diplomacy that Bulgaria sided with the Central Powers. I mention this as an illustration of the difficulties which surround us under the existing circumstances. I was reared under such conditions as to impress me with the glamour of the British flag; but I say that the Mother Country blundered in regard to Bulgaria as it has done on many other occasions, and that her mistake considerably lengthened the war. We have statesmen in Parliament, and we have politicians. I am one of the politicians; but statesmen have shown that they can blunder more than the politicians. The mishandling of Bulgaria was one instance of the kind. I hope the Prime Minister will assist us in getting back to pre-war conditions. He must see that there is no further need for this pin-pricking legislation.

Mr. BLAKELEY.—There are the Unlawful Assemblies Bill, the Passports Bill, and the Aliens Registration Bill.

Mr. MATHEWS.—Is this legislation required in order to prevent an enemy alien from injuring Australia or the Empire? It can have no possible effect in that way. The Prime Minister ought to know as well as I do that most Germans in Australia were Socialists in their own country, which they left in order to get away from the German political system.

They were treated during the war as if they had strong German sympathies, but they had not; I have worked with many of them. There may have been amongst them a few men who were paid to come to Australia to cause trouble, but the majority of them had come to Australia as refugees from the German system of government. Here they proved themselves good citizens, as we understand the term under our present political and economic systems. Instead of being democratic in their political ideas, they were as Conservative as any men in the country. The Prime Minister knows that, so why keep in existence the legislation that was introduced as a protection against them? It cannot possibly be a political factor to-day. Those German citizens resent the treatment they received, and the existence of that feeling does the country no good. I hope the Prime Minister will not wait until the King of Hungary is found, but will immediately wipe out the War Precautions Act, and all the regulations made under it, and other legislation that he considered necessary while the war continued.

Mr. HUGHES (Bendigo—Prime Minister and Attorney-General) [5.58].—I shall endeavour to direct my remarks to those criticisms of the measure which have been made by various honorable members. Perhaps I may be first permitted to say a word as to the extraordinary attitude adopted by the honorable member for Batman (Mr. Brennan). I do not understand what he wishes us to do. That we should bring down a Bill to give effect to these Treaties, but should be deprived of any power to do so is a most extraordinary suggestion. He said, in effect, if not in so many words, that whatever action we were to take under this measure to give effect to the Treaty, should be taken by virtue of Bills or other resolutions of the House. The honorable member cannot have considered the matter seriously. The main operations of this Treaty in Australia have reference to the settlement of debts owing by Austrians to Australians and by Australians to Austrians. There will probably be five or six thousand separate debts requiring adjustment under the economic clauses of the Treaty. Does the honorable member suggest that we should bring down each one of them to be settled in this House? The honorable member assented to a Treaty with Ger-

many giving us the very power which is sought in this Bill. It is now in operation, but the Government have handed over to a Public Trustee the responsibility of adjusting these debts, and, outside the reparation clauses and the control of the Islands, which are matters for this Parliament, there is little else which concerns us in the ratification of peace with Austria. Therefore, I pass by the honorable member's suggestion as one that is impracticable, and as one that I am unable to understand, let alone accept.

The honorable members for Moreton (Mr. Wienholt), Dampier (Mr. Gregory), and Melbourne Ports (Mr. Mathews) are very anxious to know when we may expect that day which is the condition precedent to the expiry of the War Precautions Act. They are not at all satisfied with my reference, by way of interjection, to the King of Hungary, which I did not intend to be an answer to their statements. I intended to quote the section of the War Precautions Act, and, now that I am on my feet, I gladly take this opportunity of explaining the position. The War Precautions Act says—

This Act shall continue in operation during the continuance of the present state of war, and no longer.

"The present state of war" is defined as continuing "until the issue of a proclamation by the Governor-General that the war between His Majesty the King and the German Emperor, and between His Majesty the King and the Emperor of Austria King of Hungary has ceased." So far as Germany and Austria are concerned, the condition precedent has been satisfied. There remains Hungary, which is now divorced from Austria, and, as I explained by way of interjection, peace with Hungary has been agreed to, but has not yet been ratified by the different Parliaments of the Great Powers. I am sure honorable members will not censure me for any delay in making peace with Hungary.

I had the honour, if it be an honour, which seems very doubtful, of introducing the War Precautions Bill of 1914, when circumstances were somewhat different from what they are now in the arrangement of parties and in other directions. At that time a good deal of criticism was directed against the Government from the benches behind the Ministry, on which some of my honorable

friends who are now opposite were then located." Speaking as the result of the experience of five years of war, I regard the passage of that measure as having been absolutely necessary; but I entirely agree with those who think that it is bad for a country that delights to boast that it is governed by a Parliament elected by a free people, that it should be governed by regulations. Before the Christmas recess I hope the Treaty with Hungary will be ratified, but, if it is not, I shall do my best to give the House the opportunity of repealing the War Precautions Act. I make one reservation in that regard. The honorable member for Wakefield (Mr. Richard Foster) has pointed out how necessary it is that this Parliament should have certain powers conferred on it by Statute, and as I agree with the view put forward by the honorable member, I wish, therefore, the House to clearly understand that whether the War Precautions Act expires by proclamation or as the result of legislation passed by this Parliament, the Government will introduce, if it considers it necessary, which I do in the present circumstances, legislation that will give it statutory power to deal with certain conditions. Otherwise the Government would have no authority to deal with a position that might menace the safety of the Commonwealth. However, the circumstances will then be entirely different. We should be administering an Act of Parliament.

When the Electoral (War-time) Bill was introduced I am sure it was necessary. No one can accuse me of being half-hearted in this matter.

Mr. BRENNAN.—No one can.

Mr. HUGHES.—There is one thing I like about the honorable member. From the very first day of the war until now I have known exactly his attitude towards it, and I think he will do me this credit, that he has known all the time where I stood. I was for the Allies, for Britain, and for the side Australia took in the war, but at the same time I could understand the attitude taken by Germans in this country. As I said when I was speaking to the Electoral (War-time) Bill, nothing was more natural than that a German, no matter how long he had been in Australia, should in a struggle between Germany and Great Britain, sympathize with Germany. I said that if I had been living in Berlin for fifty years it would make no difference to me. If a war broke

out between Great Britain and Germany I would be for Great Britain. I agree with what the honorable member for Melbourne Ports (Mr. Mathews) has said. Now that the war is over, we have to deal with a new set of conditions. It was necessary, in the interests of the country, when the war was raging to prevent those who were the friends and supporters of Germany from dominating the political life of Australia. I do not know what their views are. One thing is certain, that in Germany there are at least two sections of thought as widely set apart as are the poles, as to what should be the policy for the world and even for Germany. I do not know to which section those who are in Australia belong; but I am not one of those who believe in life-long vendettas. While there was a war I fought. Now that the war is over I want to create conditions that will make for peace, and I agree that this part of the electoral law to which the honorable member for Moreton (Mr. Wienholt) has referred has outlived its usefulness. The honorable member will hardly expect me, without an opportunity of consulting my colleagues, to make a definite statement on the matter; but, speaking for myself, I can see no reason why the Electoral (War-time) Act should not be repealed.

I hope that the Treaty with Hungary will be ratified. As soon as it is it will be laid on the table, and not an hour will be lost in asking the House to assent to it, so that the War Precautions Act will automatically disappear, because the proclamation of the termination of the war will at once issue. If there should be delay, and negotiations are dragged out unduly, steps must be taken to wipe out the War Precautions Act in another way. I have been asked to make a statement on these two important matters without having been afforded an opportunity of consulting my colleagues. Therefore, I am speaking for myself only; but, of course, I am the head of the Government, and am dealing with the situation as it seems best to me. I want it to be understood quite clearly that whenever the War Precautions Act expires, or is repealed, we shall introduce whatever legislation is necessary to enable the Government and this Parliament to deal with circumstances which now exist in this country, or which may hereafter exist, we shall

have to ask this Parliament to pass as complementary to the repeal of the War Precautions Act. Of course, the effect would be to wipe out government by regulation under that Act, and introduce government by Statute, in determining and shaping which every man in this House will have an equal voice. I think I have covered all the points that have been raised during the debate. I hope I did not misunderstand the honorable member for Batman (Mr. Brennan), who said something, I think, about Australians who were disfranchised.

Mr. BRENNAN.—I did.

Mr. HUGHES.—There are no Australians who have been disfranchised under the law to which he referred. The honorable member cannot have read the measure. I am talking about this measure which I hold in my hand, and I assure him that there are no Australians disfranchised under it. However, if I misunderstood him, I apologize.

I have set out my views clearly and fairly, I hope. I trust, further, that I have left no ground for misunderstanding concerning where my sympathies lie, while at the same time stating—just as I did in the midst of the war—that I have quite understood why Germans adopted the attitude they did, and that I should have thought very little of them if they had not.

Question resolved in the affirmative.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee:

The CHAIRMAN (Hon. J. M. Chanter).—Is it the pleasure of honorable members that the Bill be taken as a whole?

HONORABLE MEMBERS.—Hear, hear!

Mr. WIENHOLT (Moreton) [6.17].—I am particularly pleased to hear the words of the Prime Minister. I am quite satisfied with his announcement. He remarked that he did not know to which group belong those Germans who have been naturalized out here—that is to say, our settlers and their descendants. I beg leave to remind him that I am a returned soldier, and that I would not be here, representing an electorate such as Moreton, if its constituents belonged to the section which the Prime Minister may have had in his mind.

Mr. HUGHES.—I had no section in particular in mind, except that the people of

Germany are themselves divided into two or three camps; I meant the Monarchists, the Independent Socialists, and the Majority Socialists.

Mr. WIENHOLT.—I am content with what the Prime Minister has said. It is not my wish to rake up an old trouble, but the honorable member for Batman (Mr. Brennan) continually referred to those whom he called my countrymen. I do not know whether the honorable member would think that any one whose people had been British for nearly three centuries, and for something like eight generations, should still be regarded as a German. The honorable member, although he accuses me now of bringing up this matter for political advantage, did not oppose the Bill when it came before this House, and did not vote against it or even call for a division.

Mr. BRENNAN.—To which measure does the honorable member refer?

Mr. WIENHOLT.—I am speaking now of the Electoral Act. I have this satisfaction, too, namely, that, although the honorable member apparently wishes to repudiate me as a fellow-Australian, I am able, in that case also, to repudiate him.

Mr. BRENNAN (Batman) [6.20].—Do I understand, Mr. Chairman, that the consideration of this measure in Committee is being undertaken as a whole?

The CHAIRMAN.—That is so.

Mr. BRENNAN.—I protested against that course, and I am under the impression that the voicing of one protest is sufficient. However, I presume that the reiteration of my protest is now too late. Clause 3 is really the only operative clause in the Bill. It is one which enables the Governor-General to make regulations to give effect to the provisions of the Treaties of Peace with Bulgaria and Austria. A precisely similar Bill came before this House some time ago, relating to the formal Treaty of Peace with Germany. In that measure I, and, I think, other honorable members of my party, opposed an exactly similar clause. I took the view, which I repeat now, that we should not pass a Bill whose sole purpose is to enable the Government to make regulations upon international matters.

If, in discussing the second reading of this measure, I did an injustice to the honorable member for Moreton—

Mr. WIENHOLT.—Not a bit!

Mr. BRENNAN.—If I did so, I regret it. But in the reference which I made to his countrymen, I would not, as an internationalist, admit that I did him any injustice whatever, although I may have been labouring under a misunderstanding. Everything I said in relation to his view regarding the Electoral Act, which has disfranchised many Australian born, is— notwithstanding what the Prime Minister has stated—borne out by the facts. I have opposed all measures of that kind when I have been able to be present in this House. I do not understand, therefore, why it should now be said that I did not oppose the disfranchisement of Australians in the circumstances alluded to by the honorable member for Moreton. I do not undertake to recall precisely everything concerning all phases of our legislative activities three years ago, but I have consistently opposed the War Precautions Act and the various illegitimate children of which it was the dishonoured parent. For the reasons I have mentioned, I intend to vote against this Bill. I am not at all convinced by the arguments of the Prime Minister that a Treaty of Peace involves masses of detailed negotiations which require the passage of regulations. These Treaties of Peace deal with many important matters of principle to which I am entirely opposed. They have to do with a large variety of stipulations which are in flat and flagrant violation of the principles for which we allegedly entered and fought the late war and, because they are full of these inconsistencies with the terms on which we eventually decided we should enter upon negotiations for peace, and because they violate also the fundamental principles of right with respect to relations between nations, I do not propose to give general power to the Government to make worse a set of conditions which are already too bad. The Prime Minister knows perfectly well that the matters to which he has referred are purely departmental. That is to say, the giving effect to a treaty, in so far as the property of Austrians in this country or of Britishers and Australians in Austria is concerned, is carried on depart-

mentally without recourse either to regulation or to an Act of Parliament. And, if there is a matter of sufficient importance to require the framing of a statutory rule or regulation, it becomes of sufficient international importance to warrant its debate in this chamber. I am in opposition, therefore, to clause 3; and since it has been decided that the Committee must consider the measure as a whole, I am bound to raise my voice against the Bill.

Bill reported without amendment; report adopted.

Standing Orders suspended; and Bill read a third time.

Sitting suspended from 6.27 to 8 p.m.

NATIONALITY BILL.

SECOND READING.

Mr. POYNTON (Grey—Minister for Home and Territories) [8.0].—I move—

That this Bill be now read a second time.

The measure has been in circulation for a considerable period, and doubtless honorable members have made themselves fairly conversant with its provisions, which, I believe, are the most liberal ever introduced into the Commonwealth Parliament. Prior to 1903 naturalization laws were framed by the State Parliaments, and, therefore, operated only within a State. Under those circumstances, a Swede, a German, or an Italian naturalized in one State immediately became denaturalized the moment he crossed the border of the State in which he had taken out naturalization papers. In 1903 the Commonwealth Parliament passed an Act which covered the whole Commonwealth; but even under that, if an alien were to go to New Zealand, Canada, or any other part of the British Empire he would be treated as an alien. A number of Imperial Conferences were held in which such anomalies were discussed, and after careful consideration it was decided that a broader principle should be adopted within the Empire, and that naturalization in any part of the Empire should be provided for, assuming, of course, that Great Britain and the Dominions adopted a similar law.

Mr. BRENNAN.—And yet you deported a man who was naturalized in Great Britain and not in Australia.

Mr. POYNTON.—Even if this measure becomes law I want honorable members to understand that we are claiming the right to deport men from the Commonwealth, even though they may be naturalized. We claim the right, as every other part of the Empire is doing, to keep out undesirables, even though they are Britishers.

Mr. McGRATH.—Are you claiming the right to deport them without a trial?

Mr. POYNTON.—No; and this Bill will meet that objection. While there was a unanimous decision in regard to having more comprehensive provisions for naturalization within the Empire, there was a great difference of opinion as to who should give effect to them. At one stage, it was suggested that Great Britain should legislate for the whole Empire; but as that raised the question of sovereign rights, it was thought that the British Parliament should deal only with Great Britain, and that other parts of the Empire should pass their own legislation. In 1914, the Imperial Parliament passed an Act somewhat similar to this measure, and it was then necessary for the Dominions to enact a similar law. Owing to the war intervening, action in the Commonwealth was delayed; but I do not know whether we have lost anything because, as the result of experience, it has been shown that there were many defects in the Imperial Act passed in 1914. In 1917, an amending measure became law, and the Bill now before honorable members is based on that Statute. The measure is entitled a Nationality Bill, because it deals with nationality in general, and it is Empire-wide in its scope.

Part 2 of the Bill is an exact copy of section 1 of the British Consolidated Act 1914-18, and Part 3 is, in effect, the same as Part 2 of the British Act. Honorable members are probably aware that, under our present law—apart from war conditions—an alien has to be resident in the Commonwealth for two years before he is entitled to become naturalized. Under this measure, it will mean five years, but the previous residence need not all have been spent in Australia. Residence in the Empire is sufficient, provided that the last twelve months of such residence shall have been in the country granting the certificate

Sir ROBERT BEST.—What would be the position with a foreigner—say a German?

Mr. POYNTON.—There is a special law at present relating to Germans. I am now naturalizing Germans who have been here for a number of years, and the limitation has been twenty years' residence.

Sir ROBERT BEST.—Does he have to reside here?

Mr. POYNTON.—For at least twelve months.

Mr. RILEY.—Can a deported German come back in twelve months if he has resided here for four years?

Mr. POYNTON.—No.

Mr. RILEY.—How long will be required?

Mr. POYNTON.—It all depends. Canada has already passed a measure similar to this.

Mr. FLEMING.—We do not want naturalized people consisting of yellow, black, brindle, and green, such as Canada has.

Mr. POYNTON.—Naturalization under this Bill does not give the right of free access to any Dominion of the Empire, neither will its provisions place a man in a better position than if he were a natural-born British subject. It does not follow that because this measure becomes law Chinese, Indians, or any of those prohibited under our Immigration Act can come to Australia. That law remains as it is at present; but we are broadening the scope of our naturalization laws to cover those whom we consider are fit people to become citizens of the Commonwealth. Quite recently I have heard a number of complaints from people who come from Mount Lebanon, and who are placed at a great disadvantage under our Commonwealth laws. Mount Lebanon is a small principality which, since 1886, has been under French and British rule, and is surrounded by the Turkish Empire. Under our laws there is no power to naturalize these people, and quite a number of them, with whom I have come in contact, are as good citizens as we have in the Commonwealth. If this measure becomes law, it will give the Minister the power to naturalize them.

Mr. JAMES PAGE.—What about the Assyrians?

Mr. POYNTON.—They are the people to whom I am referring.

Mr. JAMES PAGE.—Then, there are those from Beyrout.

Mr. POYNTON.—So far as my experience goes, all the Assyrians in Australia come from Mount Lebanon.

Mr. McGRATH.—There are also a number who were born in Egypt.

Mr. POYNTON.—Not those of whom I speak.

Mr. JAMES PAGE.—It is unwise to give the Minister the power to determine who shall be naturalized.

Mr. POYNTON.—To whom would the honorable member give the power?

Mr. JAMES PAGE.—To Parliament.

Mr. POYNTON.—Would the honorable member favour the case of every individual being considered by this House?

Mr. JAMES PAGE.—If you are going to exclude Asiatics, you should exclude the lot.

Mr. POYNTON.—I do not look upon them as Asiatics. I know quite a number of them who are as honorable and straightforward as is the honorable member himself.

Mr. FLEMING.—And so are some Chinese.

Mr. POYNTON.—The Chinese are in a different category altogether. Would the honorable member for Maranoa (Mr. James Page) like to see Chinamen admitted?

Mr. JAMES PAGE.—If you are going to admit other Asiatics, I see no reason why you should not admit Chinamen.

Mr. POYNTON.—The Bill does not in any way interfere with existing rights.

Mr. JAMES PAGE.—You have taken away rights by the War Precautions Act.

Mr. POYNTON.—The Prime Minister (Mr. Hughes) dealt with that matter this afternoon. He said that he had not consulted his colleague, referring to me—

Mr. JAMES PAGE.—What do you say about it?

Mr. POYNTON.—I say that it is a fair and proper thing that the Act should be repealed. The honorable member for Batman (Mr. Brennan) was wrong when he said that that Act disfranchised Australian-born persons.

Mr. BRENNAN.—I did not say so. My reference was to the Act, which is still on the statute-book, preventing the

Australian descendants of certain Germans from voting at referendums and elections.

Mr. POYNTON.—I hope to be able, at an early date, to present a Bill for the repeal of that Act.

Under this Bill the Government has power to deport, and to revoke certificates of naturalization.

Mr. TUDOR.—Surely those are two very different powers.

Mr. POYNTON.—They are different powers.

Mr. JAMES PAGE.—Do you say that the Minister will have power to revoke any naturalization certificate?

Mr. POYNTON.—The Government will have that power, but it will be exercised only after a judicial inquiry, for which provision has not hitherto been made. Clause 12 provides for revocation, after an inquiry by a Justice of the High Court or a Judge of a Supreme Court of a State, and the inquiry is to be conducted in such a manner as the Governor-General may direct.

The Government still retains the right, notwithstanding anything in the Bill, to refuse admission to Australia to any naturalized person, and I venture to say that Parliament would agree that that right must be retained.

Mr. TUDOR.—That is not a right given by this Bill.

Mr. POYNTON.—No.

Clause 3 protects the rights and status of any person naturalized under the Naturalization Act 1903-1917, but should such a person desire naturalization of a wider character than that given by his certificate, he may apply to the Governor-General for a certificate for naturalization under the Bill, and the granting of his application will be in the absolute discretion of the Governor-General, who may refuse to grant it if he thinks fit. There would, of course, be a refusal of the application only in those cases in which it should not be granted. I venture to say that in very few cases would those now naturalized under the Naturalization Act be refused naturalization under the Bill.

Mr. RICHARD FOSTER.—I understand that the Government has the right to exclude any one from admission to the Commonwealth.

Mr. POYNTON.—It is an inherent right of the Government of Australia to

refuse permission to any one to land in the country.

Sir ROBERT BEST.—I do not think that that right could be exercised in regard to an Australian.

Mr. POYNTON.—I would not be dogmatic on the point. Certainly we have a right to exclude from the Commonwealth any other person, though it is rarely that the right is exercised.

The Governor-General may revoke a certificate obtained by false representation, or fraud, or concealment of material circumstances, or, if the person to whom the certificate is granted has during a war unlawfully traded with or communicated with the enemy, or has within five years of the date of the grant of the certificate been sentenced by a Court to imprisonment for not less than twelve months, to penal servitude, or to a fine of not less than £100, or was not of good character at the date of the grant of the certificate. But provision is made for an inquiry by a committee presided over by a person who is, or has been, a Justice of the High Court, or a Judge of a Supreme Court, and this inquiry is to be conducted in such manner as the Governor-General may direct.

Very liberal treatment is given to British-born or Australian-born wives of denaturalized persons, who, under the Bill, will retain their British or Australian nationality unless they signify a desire for the nationality of their husbands. As the law stands, a British-born or Australian-born woman who marries a foreigner takes his nationality, and so do their children, and should the husband be naturalized, and subsequently denaturalized, the wife and children, of course, follow him. Under the Bill, however, the wife of a denaturalized person may, if she is British or Australian born, retain her British or Australian nationality. On the other hand, if she desires to follow her husband, she can apply to take his nationality. Her children will have the mother's nationality, and should she elect to be denaturalized, will have the right to apply, within six months after arrival at the age of twenty-one years, for Australian naturalization. Since I took office, quite a large number of persons whose wives by their marriage had lost their British or Australian nationality have been naturalized. I do not think

that there is a case in which I have refused naturalization to a person of good character who has resided in Australia for a reasonable length of time.

Mr. McGRATH.—What about the Italians who did not go to the war?

Mr. POYNTON.—I do not know what cases the honorable member has in his mind.

Mr. BRENNAN.—Does the Minister say that he is granting naturalization to Australian-born women married to aliens?

Mr. POYNTON.—No; but when the husbands of such women are naturalized, the wives re-assume their Australian nationality. There was never a more liberal naturalization measure introduced into this Parliament.

Mr. McGRATH.—Why must an Italian who applied for naturalization get a reference from the Italian Consul in addition to references from three Australians?

Mr. POYNTON.—I do not know to what case the honorable member refers. I have had letters from a number of persons complaining that I am naturalizing too many Italians; but I draw no distinction, if the character of the applicant is good.

Mr. McGRATH.—The persons to whom I refer do not possess birth certificates, and have no documentary evidence of the fact that they are Italians. It is extremely difficult for them to get evidence from Italy.

Mr. POYNTON.—Why is that? Many Italians were naturalized under the State laws, and many more under our Naturalization Act. Many are still being naturalized.

Mr. McGRATH.—But I do not think that they had to produce that evidence previously.

Mr. POYNTON.—I am not aware that more evidence is required to-day than previously. My policy, and indeed the policy of the Government, in connexion with this matter, is to deal with applicants for naturalization as liberally as possible, so long as they are of good character. I have even gone farther than that. I recognise that during the war period panic ideas were sometimes prevalent, with the result that the reports which we obtained in regard to certain applicants for naturalization were not as reliable as they might have been. Since peace conditions have obtained I

have made it a practice in cases where men were alleged to have been associating with the enemy, or to have said something, perhaps in a public-house bar, which was derogatory to the Empire, to secure fresh reports concerning them, and in quite a number of cases I have found that the first reports were a little biased, and in others that they were the result of family feuds.

Mr. BRENNAN.—It was upon those wicked prejudices that men were victimized without trial. I hope that the Minister endeavoured to be fair; and if the Minister for Defence (Senator Pearce) had followed his example he would have done better.

Mr. POYNTON.—I am speaking for myself. I endeavour to hold the scales evenly as between all subjects of the Commonwealth. All that I require of applicants is good character and good citizenship, and quite a number of honorable members will support me in that statement.

In Committee we shall come to much closer grips with the measure, and I shall then be able to explain any portion of it to which my attention may be directed. Its broad principles are those which I have indicated, and I ask honorable members to give it fair consideration. I believe that it is the most liberal Bill connected with naturalization that has ever been submitted to this Parliament. Unless for some very special reason, I ask honorable members not to amend it, because its amendment will mean stultifying its operation to a very great extent, seeing that it is a copy of an Imperial Act. The whole Bill is based upon uniform legislation by the Imperial Parliament, and if we alter it in such a way that it will not conform to the Imperial Act, I cannot guarantee that it will be acceptable to the Home authorities.

Mr. JAMES PAGE.—Then why does the Minister desire to amend it so as to permit of the admission of Assyrians?

Mr. POYNTON.—Because that amendment will not infringe the Imperial compact.

Mr. JAMES PAGE.—Will the Minister show us the provisions that we may amend, and those that we may not?

Mr. POYNTON.—I am sure that the honorable member is not serious in his suggestion. In Committee we shall be able to deal with any of the points that I have not touched. I trust that honor-

able members will assist me in getting the measure through the House, seeing that it will confer considerable benefits upon a large number of people who are deprived of them to-day.

Debate (on motion by Mr. TUDOR) adjourned.

PASSPORTS BILL.

SECOND READING.

Debate resumed from 1st July (*vide* page 2510), on motion by Mr. POYNTON—

That this Bill be now read a second time.

Mr. TUDOR (Yarra) [8.37].—Some two or three months have elapsed since the Minister introduced this Bill.

Mr. JAMES PAGE.—The honorable member ought to be well versed in its provisions, seeing that it was introduced more than two months ago.

Mr. TUDOR.—At that time I had prepared some notes upon it, but, unfortunately, I have since mislaid them. However, I take it that the Bill relates only to persons who are leaving Australia, and does not refer to any person entering the Commonwealth. To my mind it is what the Minister referred to just now as something in the nature of panic legislation.

Mr. RICHARD FOSTER.—It is international legislation.

Mr. TUDOR.—It is nothing of the kind. It is not an international compact in regard to the issue of passports. Every nation has acted independently in respect of that matter. Before the outbreak of war it was possible for men to leave this country and to land in any part of the world without a passport. For instance, the Minister for the Navy (Mr. Laird Smith), who was a member of the Empire Parliamentary Delegation which visited the Old Country a few years ago, was able to land anywhere without a passport.

Mr. LAIRD SMITH.—I had a passport, but I had no need to use it.

Mr. TUDOR.—Exactly. When I was working upon the Continent, between the years 1889 and 1894, I had no occasion to use a passport. But since the war broke out certain nations have adopted the principle of denying any person the right to land without a passport.

Mr. RICHARD FOSTER.—The issuing of passports is an international necessity.

Mr. TUDOR.—The honorable member has amended his statement three times, and he is now getting upon right lines. But to my mind the passport system is not a necessity.

Mr. BRENNAN.—It is a consequence of the diseased conditions which have arisen out of the war.

Mr. TUDOR.—I call it a bad attack upon the nations of the world of "scare fever."

Mr. JAMES PAGE.—And this Bill is the poultice which it is proposed to apply.

Mr. TUDOR.—Yes.

Mr. POYNTON. — How are people to leave Australia in the absence of legislation of this kind?

Mr. TUDOR.—I am well aware that if we refuse to pass the measure we shall be penalizing nobody but Australians. Persons who come here at the present time are armed with passports from their country of origin. But the sooner we get back to pre-war conditions the better it will be for ourselves and for other people.)

Mr. POYNTON.—I have made an arrangement with New Zealand under which the issue of passports will not be necessary.

Mr. TUDOR.—When the Minister (Mr. Poynton) delivered his second-reading speech upon this Bill, on 1st July last, he had not arrived at any such arrangement with New Zealand. At that time members of the Butchers Union, slaughtermen, and members of the Australian Workers Union were not permitted to travel from the Commonwealth to that Dominion, nor were New Zealanders able to come here without passports, although it is an advantage that they should be able to enter both countries with the utmost freedom. Since then the Minister has been able to make an arrangement with New Zealand under which this passport system will be abandoned.

Mr. POYNTON. — The first contingent from New Zealand under the new arrangement will arrive this week.

Mr. TUDOR. — The sooner we can make a general arrangement of that character the better. I know that the departure of vessels has been hung up for some time owing to existing conditions. Some months ago several of the Orient liners were kept back because of the difficulty

which passengers experienced in obtaining passports at the time.

If I thought that by so doing I should benefit Australia and the world generally, I should certainly vote against the Bill, because, as the honorable member for Batman (Mr. Brennan) has said, it is a measure which has arisen out of the abnormal conditions caused by the late war. If people going from Australia to Great Britain, America, and Canada can be permitted to depart under an arrangement similar to that which has been made with New Zealand, it will be infinitely better than the present cumbrous passport system. Moreover, it is very expensive to arrange for passports.

Mr. POYNTON.—The authorities upon any part of the west coast of America charge twelve dollars to look at one's passport.

Mr. TUDOR.—I know that when he was in Canada recently, a brother of the honorable member for Batman wrote an article which appeared in the Melbourne *Argus*, in which he stated that the Canadian authorities were making the passport system a means of obtaining revenue. Whatever else honorable members opposite may desire, I am sure they do not wish it to be revenue producing. I would not even go so far as to say that it should be made to pay for itself. If the authorities upon the west coast of America are charging twelve dollars to look at one's passport, that is, roughly, equivalent to £3, and if that amount is to be charged every time a passport has to be inspected, the system is going to prove very expensive.

Mr. POYNTON.—For some time past I have been in communication with the authorities at Washington, with a view to the abolition of the system.

Mr. TUDOR.—That is a very good idea. I am anxious that everything possible should be done to facilitate travel, because I believe that the more we knew of persons in other countries, the less reason we shall have to hate them. I hope we shall arrive as soon as possible at a better belief in human nature, and take a more sane view of people living in other countries as well as our own.

I am not sure yet whether it is not possible to amend the Bill in some other direction, but I did not expect it to come

on to-day. It was No. 11 on the notice-paper, and would not have been reached but for the postponement of six previous items.

Mr. POYNTON.—Clause 4 is the clause which permits arrangements to be made with other countries.

Mr. TUDOR.—I hope the Minister will begin to make those arrangements at once.

Mr. BURCHELL.—Perhaps the Imperial Conference next year may discuss the question seriously.

Mr. TUDOR.—I have not much faith in the ability of conferences of the kind to do very much work. The Minister has told us that, without any conference, he has been able to effect reciprocity in this matter between Australia and New Zealand. It would be a good thing if we could effect it also with Canada.

Mr. POYNTON.—On the first occasion, New Zealand refused it.

Mr. TUDOR.—We have had difficulties with New Zealand before over pensions and other matters. I am a believer in reciprocity where it can be put into operation in this way. I am not satisfied with the Bill, because I believe it is only part of the aftermath of the war. The whole of the nations of the world have become panicky during the war, and we are passing panic legislation simply because we have had a very bad attack of "scare fever."

Mr. BRENNAN (Batman) [8.48].—There was a happy time before the war, when people who were fortunate enough to be able to travel, went backwards and forwards unimpeded, unchallenged, unhampered, not interfered with, or interrupted, or insulted, or troubled in any of the numerous vexatious ways that are now made, not only possible, but inevitable under various classes of regulations, which limit the activities of men and women who hitherto thought themselves to be free. This is a Bill precisely of that kind to which I have referred earlier in the afternoon, introduced by this Government for the purpose of perpetuating in time of peace conditions which were thought to be necessary, but which I never admitted to be necessary, in time of war. I quite realize that saner counsels will prevail before many years go by. Even this Government, inflamed as it is with the utterly foolish notion that the people of this country must go through

life in a state of constant dread and apprehension, lest some foreigner or foreign country should inflict some injustice upon them, will recognise in a few years that Australia must drop back into the sane groove of every-day life, trusting the common sense and sense of justice of people in countries other than our own. It is because I wish to get rid of all these vexatious restrictions, which some people thought the war rendered necessary, that I desire to offer to the Bill some criticism, which will be very short, and some opposition, which, I fear, will be futile.

Mr. POYNTON.—Will the honorable member show me how any one can leave Australia and obtain entrance to another country unless he has a passport, except in the case of New Zealand.

Mr. BRENNAN.—I cannot suggest any means by which he can leave Australia without a passport so long as this Government is in power, but if I were Minister for Home and Territories in a congenial Government, as I hope to be some day in the remote future, I should afford ample facilities for people to leave this country without a passport, with a cordial invitation for them to come back at the earliest possible moment.

Mr. RICHARD FOSTER.—Where would they go in the meantime?

Mr. BRENNAN.—What may be required of them in order to gain admittance to other countries is quite another matter. It is a matter for regulation by the Government of the country to which the person leaving these shores desires to go. It is not because we find, if we do find it so, that vexatious restrictions have been raised at other ports, over which we have no control, that we should, ourselves, not only condone, but encourage, the same kind of thing in our own country, and create objectionable and embarrassing restrictions having application to our own people who seek to enjoy the right of travel, or who have to go abroad on matters of duty or business.

I see, on reading the Bill, that no person of the age of sixteen years may leave without a passport. The testing of whether a person is sixteen years of age or not is in the discretion of that important person vaguely described as an officer. If, "in the opinion of an officer," a person is sixteen years of age, he is not to be permitted to leave these shores without a

passport. I can see in the future, because I have seen it in the past, and have been on board ship where the thing has taken place, the passengers lined up, in military order, as the ship travels towards the quay, many of them dragged out of their bunks, for the purpose of parading, while this most important official, with all his gewgaws on him, comes on board in his leisurely way, to inspect the suffering company for the purpose of seeing whether they have these elaborate documents, with photographs attached, to authorize them to travel from port to port. Many of us hoped that we had left that state of things behind us, especially as we are now two years away from the odious conditions of war, and it is about time we made some protest against the passage of a Bill such as this. I suppose it and a number of other Acts will be passed, so far as they are necessary to perpetuate the main provisions of the War Precautions Act, because there is in power in Australia a Government who cannot divest themselves of the war feeling, and the pleasure of indulging war powers and war restrictions, and, in a general way, if I may say so without giving offence, making themselves, as far as is consistent with true patriotism, public nuisances.

Mr. CHARLTON (Hunter) [8.55].—The Minister for Home and Territories (Mr. Poynton) contends that this Bill is absolutely necessary, in order to bring us into line with the legislation enacted in other countries, and that unless it is passed it will be very difficult for citizens of the Commonwealth to travel. With the two previous speakers, I regret that, now that the war is out of the way, we should be bringing in restrictive legislation every day throughout the British Empire. I hoped that we would get back to pre-war conditions, and that our citizens would have the fullest possible liberty; but different measures indicate that we have got into a groove, and there appears to be little hope of getting back to the conditions that prevailed prior to the war. We are asked to pass a measure of this kind on the ground that our people cannot be permitted to land in other parts of the world without a passport. The Minister, in his second-reading speech, showed clearly that, so far as this measure is concerned, even if persons come here from other parts of the world armed with a passport, we should not permit them to

enter Australia unless we so desire. In other words, the Minister says that the carrying of a passport is no guarantee to a traveller that he will be able to land in Australia. If it is necessary for people's freedom to be curtailed in this way, and for them to be compelled before they can sail from Australia to England, or from England to Australia, to obtain a passport, then it ought to be equally incumbent on the Government of the country of destination to accept that passport in all good faith. If a person is armed with a passport we have no right to refuse to allow him to enter. If we can so refuse, the passport is of no value. We must give some consideration to the trouble to which people are put. We try to simplify things in our own country as much as possible, yet many people have been put to great inconvenience in the endeavour to obtain passports in order to go away. I have had letters on the subject, and Senator Gardiner, in another place, quoted the case of a lady who found it difficult to obtain a passport within a reasonable time of the date for which she had booked to sail. If we are to pass legislation of this kind, every facility should be given to the citizens of Australia to obtain a passport within a reasonable period. I cannot understand why we should enact legislation of this kind. Surely we have not become so panic stricken within the British Empire that we have to pass measures of this sort, which count for very little, except to harass people who desire to travel. That is about the only effect it has.

Mr. GREGORY.—And this Bill seems to impose severe penalties on any person who makes a mistake.

Mr. CHARLTON.—Yes. Penalties are provided which a man cannot escape if he does anything in contravention of this legislation. Even if he does it by accident, and not wilfully, he is still liable to the penalties set out in the Bill.

We are enacting legislation which is not in the best interests of the citizens of the Commonwealth or of the British Empire. We are restricting their rights, and to a very large extent taking away from them the freedom they enjoyed prior to the war, because of things which happened during the war. Something should

be done on behalf of the Commonwealth by making representations to the British Government and other Powers with a view of doing away with passports altogether.

Mr. POYNTON.—I have already made arrangements with New Zealand.

Mr. CHARLTON.—That is a step in the right direction; but if the Minister has succeeded in the case of New Zealand, why should he not succeed with Great Britain and other countries?

Mr. POYNTON.—I have been for a considerable time in communication with the United States with a view to abolishing the \$12 charged for looking at a passport, but I have not succeeded.

Mr. CHARLTON.—It is a shame that the United States or any other country should charge so much for examining a passport. This charge of \$12 means £3, according to present values, though in normal times it is £2 8s. How many poor people, wage-earners and others, are there who have no money to spare?

Mr. JAMES PAGE.—Oh, they have no right to travel!

Mr. CHARLTON.—It would appear that such people have no liberty at all. Even after the passport is examined, there is no guarantee that the traveller can go further, because, as the Minister says, every Government retains the right to refuse a person a landing even if he has a passport.

Mr. POYNTON.—That is an inherent right everywhere.

Mr. CHARLTON.—Then it is an argument why we do not require legislation of this kind. Why should people be put to the inconvenience of getting passports?

Mr. TUDOR.—How much does a passport cost in Australia?

Mr. POYNTON.—It costs 10s.

Mr. TUDOR.—Then there is the expense of the photograph as well.

Mr. CHARLTON.—That is so, and in the United States a traveller is asked to pay another £3. It may be that some other country will demand an even higher fee for examining a passport.

I object to this legislation as quite unnecessary in a British community at the present day. We should get back to pre-war conditions as quickly as possible,

and give people the fullest liberty consistent with the interests of the country.

Mr. POYNTON.—Clause 4 gives the Minister power to make arrangements with other countries for exemption.

Mr. CHARLTON.—That is so. I can imagine that the Minister, while introducing this Bill, would rather be without such legislation, but because other countries have made provision of the kind, it is deemed necessary to do so here. Is the Minister availing himself of the power given by clause 4? This is restrictive legislation which interferes with the rights of the people; and the sooner it is repealed, so far as the British-speaking races are concerned, the better for all.

Mr. RILEY (South Sydney) [9.4].—I am surprised to hear the Minister (Mr. Poynton) say that Britishers cannot land in any part of the British Empire without a passport. How long have such provisions prevailed?

Mr. POYNTON.—For a long time. I know that when the honorable member for Balaclava (Mr. Watt) went away he had to take a passport.

Mr. RILEY.—No passports were insisted upon in the case of the thousands of young men who left Australia for France, Belgium, Italy, and Gallipoli, but now, after they have done their duty in protecting those countries, they are called upon to provide themselves with passports if they wish to go there again. I think the Government ought to insist on free intercourse with those countries, if the war is to prove of any benefit to the Allied Powers. One would think, with such a Bill before us, that the peoples of the world were at one another's throats at the present time. I suppose the next proposal will be to add fingerprints to the photos on the passports. This Bill, no doubt, is to assist people to get through the barriers that have been erected by other countries.

Mr. LISTER.—The Bill is made compulsory by the action of other countries.

Mr. RILEY.—That is no reason why we should follow their example; we should set an example to other countries. At the next meeting of the League of Nations it should be made a cardinal point to do away with passports in the European Allied countries. Even in the case of Germany and the other late enemy

countries, I do not see that passports are necessary now that the war is over. I shall support the Bill, but I trust that the Minister will use his influence to get the pernicious system of passports abolished.

Mr. GREGORY (Dampier) [9.7].—I did not hear the Minister (Mr. Poynton) when he introduced the measure, but the point that appeals to me is that, if any legislation be required, it is rather in connexion with people entering the Commonwealth than with those leaving it. I am somewhat in doubt as to the real purport of the Bill. I quite realize the necessity for great care in the case of immigration, but I cannot see the same necessity in the case of emigration. The Bill would appear to be a measure to prevent emigration, imposing, as it does, many restrictions and heavy penalties on persons desiring to leave this country. It is to the undesirables who are coming into the country that we should give attention.

Sir ROBERT BEST.—They are dealt with under the Immigration Restriction Act.

Mr. GREGORY.—I notice that any person entering the Commonwealth shall, if required, give up his passport, but I do not know under what Act we can compel any person to have one. I am not speaking of the powers under the War Precautions Act.

Mr. TUDOR.—That is the Act under which the Government take power to-day to compel people to show passports.

Mr. GREGORY.—But we expect that Act to expire shortly. Under what power is the Government able to insist on a person coming here having a passport? I have tried, without success, to ascertain from the Minister what power he has at present, outside the War Precautions Act.

Mr. BRENNAN.—There is no power outside this Bill.

Mr. GREGORY.—Clause 5 requires that a person entering the country who is required to be in possession of a passport shall, if required, give it up, but I know of no Act that compels him to have a passport beyond the War Precautions Act. As I say, the War Precautions

Act, with its regulations, will cease to be operative.

Mr. BRENNAN.—The Government will make regulations under this Bill.

Mr. TUDOR.—Not for persons coming in.

Mr. GREGORY.—That, I think, would be *ultra vires*; there is no specific power given to demand a passport from persons coming into the country. We ought to protect ourselves in regard to persons entering the country; but if any one chooses to leave Australia without a passport, that, to a great extent, is his own "look out." In Committee I hope there will be some slight alterations made in regard to the penalties.

Mr. GABB (Angas) [9.13].—I see no necessity for the honorable member for Dampier (Mr. Gregory) to "sool on" the Government to prevent undesirable people, or those whom they may regard as undesirable, from entering the country. That has already been done under the War Precautions Act, and the Government will, no doubt, take care to retain the power when the operation of that Act ceases. I am sorry that any Government of a free and enlightened British community should feel it necessary to introduce a Bill of this kind. When we have a League of Nations, and there are efforts being made everywhere to bring the nations of the world nearer together in brotherhood, a measure of this kind should not be deemed necessary. I have carefully read part of this measure, and I am struck with amazement that it should be compulsory for a British subject—I can understand other arrangements for subjects of Asiatic origin—to have a passport to enable him to go from one part of the Empire to another. We hear much said about Imperial Federation, and so forth; but if such measures as this are necessary we are not only a long way from Imperial Federation, but drifting in the direction of breaking up the Empire. I am going to vote against the Bill, and I again express my regret that the Government have thought it necessary to introduce it.

Question.—That the Bill be now read a second time—put. The House divided.

Ayes	26
Noes	9
Majority	17

AYES.

Bamford, F. W.
Bell, G. J.
Best, Sir Robert
Cameron, D. C.
Chanter, J. M.
Cook, Robert
Corser, E. B. C.
Fleming, W. M.
Poster, Richard
Francis, F. H.
Gibson, W. G.
Greene, W. M.
Gregory, H.
Higgs, W. G.

Hill, W. C.
Jackson, D. S.
Jowett, E.
Lister, J. H.
Mackay, G. H.
Marks, W. M.
Marr, C. W. C.
Poynton, A.
Smith, Laird
Wienholt, A.

Tellers:

Burchell, R. J.
Story, W. H.

NOES.

Blakeley, A.
Brennan, F.
Charlton, M.
Gabb, J. M.
McGrath, D. C.

Page, James
Tudor, F. G.
Tellers:
Mathews, J.
Riley, E.

PAIRS.

Watt, W. A.
Bayley, J. G.
Fowler, J. M.
Bowden, E. K.
Livingston, J.
Hughes, W. M.
Cook, Sir Joseph
Groom, L. E.
Ryrie, Sir Granville
Rodgers, A. S.
Wise, G. H.
Maxwell, G. A.
Bruce, S. M.
Lamond, Hector
Prowse, J. H.
Chapman, Austin

Anstey, F.
West, J. E.
Fenton, J. E.
Catts, J. H.
Cunningham, L. L.
Lavelle, T. J.
Lazzarini, H. P.
Mahon, H.
Mahony, W. G.
Makin, N. J. O.
Maloney, Dr.
McDonald, C.
Moloney, Parker
Nicholls, S. R.
Ryan, T. J.
Watkins, D.

Question so resolved in the affirmative.
Bill read a second time.

In Committee:

Clause 1 agreed to.

Clause 2—

In this Act, unless the contrary intention appears—

“Passport” means a passport—

(a) which was, not more than two years previously, issued or renewed by, or on behalf of, the Government of the country of which the person to whom it relates is a citizen or subject.

Mr. TUDOR (Yarra) [9.21].—During the second-reading debate, the honorable member for Dampier (Mr. Gregory) pointed out that the Bill did not provide for persons coming into Australia, except in a subsequent clause, under which certain exemptions may be granted. Under this clause, it is fitting that I should raise the question as to the power of the Government, by virtue of regulations made under the War Precautions Act, to compel persons coming to Australia to produce passports. I have

heard that a very eminent Britisher who had visited Australia was obliged to obtain a passport to return to Great Britain. It is an absolute scandal that persons, against whom nothing can be alleged, should be subject to this indignity. This system may be employed to keep out persons who, in the opinion of the Government, may be undesirable; but who, in every other respect, may be very desirable citizens. Under the War Precautions Act, certain things were done which would not have been tolerated in ordinary circumstances, and as we have got back to normal conditions, I hope the Government will abandon this practice as soon as possible. In Great Britain, the same course of action is, no doubt, being taken under the Defence of the Realm Act, but I do not know under what authority immigrants are controlled in the United States, where the charge, I understand, is about \$12 per head. The immigration laws of the United States are very stringent, but I have found that persons travelling first-class or saloon get infinitely better treatment from the immigration officials there than do persons who travel second-class, or who, unfortunately, have to travel steerage. I enter my protest against the Government continuing the practice, authorized under the War Precautions Regulations, of examining passports of persons coming to Australia. There is no other authority, and the regulations promulgated under that Act were never intended to be used for this particular purpose. I hope the Minister will take an early opportunity of dealing with the matter.

Mr. POYNTON.—Do you say that we have no power, under the Constitution, to keep people out of the Commonwealth?

Mr. TUDOR.—We have power under the Constitution to do that by legislation, and we passed the Immigration Restriction Act for that special purpose, but there is not one word in that measure to compel persons to produce passports. If Parliament decides that we are to have this system, which, not very many years ago, was denounced as the Continental system, the position will, of course, be different. Great Britain prided herself upon the fact that she offered asylum to people who were driven out of their own country, and who afterwards proved very

good citizens of the United Kingdom. Of course, some honorable members may say that she has now seen the error of her ways. I do not think so. We may say the same in Australia. Many people who have proved good citizens of the Commonwealth left their own country on account of the laws passed there.

Mr. BLAKELEY (Darling) [9.28].—I join with my leader (Mr. Tudor) in expressing the hope that these petty irritations will cease. About two years ago I drew attention to a scheme, not confined to the British Empire, but world-wide in its operation, for the interchange of photographs and copies of passports.

Mr. Tudor.—It was called a black-list.

Mr. BLAKELEY.—It is purely a black-list against the militants of the world, and so well has it worked that the Government have taken full advantage of the principle. I have not the slightest doubt that, under this Bill, the militants of America will be prevented from coming to Australia, and the militants from Australia will be blocked from landing in America. This Bill will only legalize what has been done for some years. The object is to preserve the present systems of government throughout the world. Heaven knows we already have plenty of laws; for every offence there are about ten different Statutes.

Mr. BRENNAN.—The Government create offences and then introduce Statutes to deal with them.

Mr. BLAKELEY.—We are asked to create an offence in order to provide some scope for the operation of the measure. I object to the evil customs of Europe being transplanted to Australia. It will not be long before Australia is in the same position as some European countries, such as Germany and Austria, where a man cannot go round the corner without a passport, which he must take to some official, who asks all sorts of impertinent questions. I foresee the time when a man passing from Victoria to New South Wales will be subjected to scrutiny by some meddlesome official, whose especial duty it will be to see that the working class agitators do not freely mix with the community. What is the necessity for such restrictions? Are the Government afraid of a revolution? Are a large number of people, who will seek to wreck the present system of government, trying to gain admission to Australia? If that is the

reason for this legislation the Government should say so. I have held the opinion for some years that the capitalistic Governments adhere to the passport system because they have found it to work well in their interests. It keeps a tag on every militant man. I know that the record of one of *The Worker* staff is contained in the American files. The record of every militant journalist and politician in Australia is known to the authorities in Europe, and if any of those men attempted to land in America, they would be watched, if not refused a landing. The Commonwealth Government have supplied the American authorities with that information, and I have not the slightest doubt that the American Government has reciprocally furnished the Commonwealth authorities with the names and histories of all persons who are likely to come to Australia and affect, not so much our system of society, as the jobs which Ministers hold.

Mr. POYNTON.—These things are not true merely because the honorable member says so.

Mr. BLAKELEY.—I have not invented these statements. By reason of information I have received from America I know that my statements are true of several men who are well known in Australia, and I have not the slightest doubt that the names and the information were sent to America by the present Commonwealth Government. This is part of a reciprocal arrangement for keeping the existing Governments in power, and to maintain supervision over all people who are likely to cause inconvenience and anxiety to those Governments.

Mr. Tudor.—Would the present Government allow Mr. Harry Holland, M.H.R., of New Zealand, to come to Australia?

Mr. BLAKELEY.—I cannot conceive of his being allowed to land in Australia under the passport system. If the Government are afraid of revolution, and for that reason desire to prevent militant propagandists coming to Australia, they should speak their minds frankly, and not introduce this legislation under the pretence that it is necessary to keep out of Australia some chap of whom nobody knows—some anarchist, or nihilist, or person of that sort. At first it was thought that this measure might be required for health reasons, but that is not

so; already we have enough laws to safeguard health, so far as arrivals from overseas are concerned. The Bill aims primarily at the militant propagandists of the world, and I shall oppose it at every stage and shall vote against every clause in it.

Mr. GABB (Angas) [9.35].—Passport is defined as a passport "which was, not more than two years previously, issued or renewed by, or on behalf of, the Government of the country of which the person to whom it relates is a citizen or subject." What is the reason for the two years' limitation? It will be hard, if a person who arrives from another country, and remains in Australia five years, is not permitted to return to his own country on the passport issued to him when he left.

Mr. POYNTON.—There are very few cases of travellers remaining in Australia five years.

Mr. GABB.—There may be people who remain in Australia for two or three years in order to gain a thorough knowledge of our people and our resources, and who then decide to return to their own country.

Mr. POYNTON.—In such cases the passport would be extended.

Mr. GABB.—If that is so there can be no harm in broadening the language of the Bill. I move—

That the word "two" in paragraph (a) be omitted, and the word "five" inserted in lieu thereof.

Mr. CHARLTON (Hunter) [9.37].—There is a good deal to be said for the amendment. A person may get a passport with the intention of travelling to another country, but he may make a prolonged stay in some other land *en route*. If he remains there for two years his passport will be required to be renewed; and how can that be done unless it is sent back to the country in which it was issued? The Minister (Mr. Poynton) should give careful consideration to this provision, for it may be placing an obstacle in the way of many *bonâ fide* travellers. A person leaving Great Britain for Australia with a passport may remain in America for two or three years, in which event his passport must be renewed by Great Britain before he can continue his voyage to Australia.

Mr. BAMFORD.—Could not the passport be viséd by the British Consul in America?

Mr. CHARLTON.—If the Consul could renew the passport, the difficulty might be overcome. I support the amendment.

Question—That the word proposed to be omitted stand part of the clause—put. The Committee divided.

Ayes	25
Noes	8

Majority	..	17
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AYES.

Atkinson, L.	Hill, W. C.
Bamford, F. W.	Jackson, D. S.
Bell, G. J.	Lister, J. H.
Cameron, D. C.	Mackay, G. H.
Cook, Robert	Marks, W. M.
Corser, E. B. C.	Marr, C. W. C.
Fleming, W. M.	Page, Dr. Earle
Foster, Richard	Poynton, A.
Francis, F. H.	Smith, Laird
Gibson, W. G.	Wienholt, A.
Greene, W. M.	<i>Tellers:</i>
Gregory, H.	Burchell, R. J.
Higgs, W. G.	Story, W. H.

NOES.

Blakeley, A.	Tudor, F. G.
Brennan, F.	
Gabb, J. M.	<i>Tellers:</i>
Mathews, J.	Charlton, M.
McGrath, D. C.	Riley, E.

PAIRS.

Watt, W. A.	Anstey, F.
Bayley, J. G.	West, J. E.
Fowler, J. M.	Fenton, J. E.
Bowden, E. K.	Catts, J. H.
Livingston, J.	Cunningham, L. L.
Hughes, W. M.	Lavelle, T. J.
Cook, Sir Joseph	Lazzarini, H. P.
Groom, L. E.	Mahon, H.
Ryrie, Sir Granville	Mahony, W. G.
Rodgers, A. S.	Makin, N. J. O.
Wise, G. H.	Maloney, Dr.
Maxwell, G. A.	McDonald, C.
Bruce, S. M.	Moloney, Parker
Lamond, Hector	Nicholls, S. R.
Prowse, J. H.	Ryan, T. J.
Chapman, Austin	Watkins, D.
Towett, E.	Page, James

Question so resolved in the negative.

Amendment negatived.

Clause agreed to.

Clause 3—

(1) Subject to this Act, no person who is, or appears to an officer to be, more than sixteen years of age, shall embark at any place in the Commonwealth for a journey to any place beyond the Commonwealth unless—

- (a) he is the holder of a passport or other document authorizing his departure; and
- (b) his passport has been viséd or indorsed in the prescribed manner for that journey.

Penalty: One hundred pounds, or imprisonment for six months.

(2) Sub-section (1) of this section shall not apply to—

(g) any *bonâ fide* resident or tourist travelling to Papua or Norfolk Island who holds a return ticket;

Mr. BRENNAN (Batman) [9.45].—The Minister (Mr. Poynton) gave us to understand that this Bill was a benevolent measure designed to assist citizens of Australia to make arrangements to travel conveniently to foreign countries by taking with them a passport supplied to them by him for a small consideration; but I find from a close scrutiny of the Bill that, if the Minister fails to be as generous as he promises to be, and does not kindly supply a passport, the tourist becomes liable to a fine of £100, or imprisonment for six months, for not having availed himself of the kindness of the Minister.

Mr. POYNTON.—The tourist is exempt.

Mr. BRENNAN.—I understand that certain persons may be exempted by the Minister, but the only reference in the clause to tourists is to persons travelling to Papua or Norfolk Island. As it is a monstrous proposition to render people liable to a fine of £100, or imprisonment for six months, for having failed to avail themselves of a passport, I propose to move an amendment later to reduce the penalty to £1.

Mr. BLAKELEY (Darling) [9.50].—The Bill will create enough trouble without the discretion given in this clause to an officer to say to the passenger, "You are apparently over sixteen years of age, and will need a passport." It is a discretionary power that should not be allowed. Trouble in this direction might be raised when a vessel is on the point of departure.

Mr. POYNTON.—The provision to which the honorable member relates has occasioned no trouble or hardship.

Mr. BLAKELEY.—If it has not operated I see no use for it. It is possibly some verbiage copied from an overseas Act. I see no reason why the age should not be fixed at sixteen years, and all discretionary power taken away from any officer. With the view of deleting this unnecessary and

ridiculous provision, which is likely to cause a good deal of trouble, I move—

That in sub-clause (1) the words "or appears to an officer to be" be left out.

Mr. POYNTON (Grey—Minister for Home and Territories) [9.54].—Of course, the honorable member for Darling (Mr. Blakeley), being opposed to the Bill, lock, stock and barrel, is endeavouring to make it more difficult to work. If the words he asks the Committee to omit were struck out, it would render necessary a sworn declaration as to a person's age; whereas now the simple admission by an officer that a person is, or is not, under sixteen years of age, is sufficient. The honorable member wishes the passenger to be submitted to all the difficulty of producing a birth certificate as to his age. Since I have been administering the Act, I have not heard of any hardship having been occasioned by this provision.

Mr. CHARLTON (Hunter) [9.55].—The clause needs revising. It will cause hardship in many cases. For instance, persons who are travelling with their families will be obliged to secure passports costing 10s. each for their children between the ages of sixteen and twenty-one years; and if they are visiting America the examination of each passport will entail a payment of £3. If we are not compelled by legislation of a similar character elsewhere to provide that every child over sixteen years of age must be furnished with a passport when travelling abroad, I see no necessity for this provision. There is also the case of persons who are leaving Australia to go to their friends in other countries, and who, very often, are hard pressed to raise sufficient money to get away without having to incur this additional expense of providing themselves with passports. I am not inclined to move an amendment, but I think the Minister would be well advised to make the age twenty-one years.

Mr. POYNTON.—That would not help, because the age of sixteen years applies in legislation in other parts of the world.

Mr. CHARLTON.—It is a ridiculous provision, and the sooner it is amended the better. I am sorry that we are obliged to follow in the footsteps of Governments elsewhere that make mistakes

of this kind. Additional expense will be entailed on the immigrants we are endeavouring to bring to Australia, or on the Government, if parents are compelled to supply their children between sixteen and twenty-one years of age with passports. Surely it should be sufficient if the parents themselves are provided with them. At any rate, whatever is done in other countries, we ought to be in a position to decide upon the conditions under which we propose to allow people to come into Australia. There is no need for us to make our laws in this respect identical with those in force in other countries. It is not fair to compel children under twenty-one years of age to have passports when their parents are already provided with them. The Minister (Mr. Poynton) would be well advised to look into this matter. I regard this as restrictive legislation, which we ought not to pass.

Amendment negatived.

Mr. BLAKELEY (Darling) [10.0].—I consider the age of sixteen ridiculously low. This piece of legislation should not seek to gather in persons under twenty-one. If the law means anything at all, it is intended to keep watch upon people arriving in and leaving this country. Who will say that any boy or girl sixteen and a-half years of age was contemplating or instigating a revolution in Australia? If there is anything at all in a measure of this character it should aim at keeping undesirables out of the country, and at keeping "tab" over the departure of persons for countries with which we may have reciprocal arrangements in respect of undesirables. I move—

That the word "sixteen" be left out, with a view to insert in lieu thereof the words "twenty-one."

Amendment negatived.

Mr. TUDOR (Yarra) [10.2].—I strongly press on the Minister the uselessness of paragraph *g*. None of the steam-ship companies nowadays issue return tickets.

Mr. POYNTON.—But they may do.

Mr. TUDOR.—They do not. The return ticket has been abolished, just as on the railways. There has been too much trafficking in them, and the steam-ship companies have followed the lead of the State railway authorities. The provision is quite useless as it stands.

Mr. POYNTON.—What harm can it do?

Mr. GREENE.—I think some of the steam-ship companies issue return tickets, and it is quite likely that they may do so in the passenger service to the islands.

Mr. TUDOR.—At any rate, the Minister has no information, and I assure him that what I say is correct. The paragraph should be left out.

Mr. BRENNAN (Batman) [10.4].—I appeal to honorable members opposite to be reasonable with regard to the proposed imposition of a fine of £100. As the clause reads, an officer may decide that a young person who is not more than fifteen is, in his judgment, sixteen. The officer having come to his decision, the young person in question is deemed to be sixteen years of age and becomes liable to be fined £100 or to undergo six months' imprisonment for having gone on board a ship without a passport. It is an astounding proposition. I move—

That the words "hundred pounds or imprisonment for six months" be left out with a view to insert in lieu thereof the word "pound."

Mr. GABB (Angas) [10.6].—I strongly support the amendment. If a minor were proceeded against for this alleged offence, and were called upon to pay a fine of £100, that would bring the parents in. I admire the spirit of a young fellow who may desire to travel, and who refuses to be turned aside from his ambitious objective, even by the risks here to be imposed. It appeals to my sporting instincts that he should take the risks, realizing that, if his parents did not see fit or were unable to pay the fine, he might have to serve a term of six months' imprisonment. Does not that point of view appeal to the Minister?

Mr. RILEY (South Sydney) [10.7].—I also strongly support the amendment. Suppose that a lad goes on board a ship without a passport.

Mr. POYNTON.—One can suppose any number of imaginary cases.

Mr. TUDOR.—There have been one or two cases of stowaways.

Mr. RILEY.—Of course. A boy may have no harm in his mind so far as his country is concerned, but may wish to do what hundreds of others have done. The amendment is altogether reasonable.

Mr. CHARLTON (Hunter) [10.8].—Why should the Government persist in its opposition to the amendment? They should not be so greatly concerned over persons desirous of leaving Australia. Their chief interest lies with the class of people who want to get into the country. Why should it be made obligatory on the part of those who desire to leave our shores to obtain a passport? If a person appears to be sixteen years of age, even though he or she is not, this clause provides for a fine of £100 simply because an officer has been guilty of misjudgment. That is monstrous. Why all this fuss if a youth desires to work his passage on a vessel in order to see a little more of the world, or even if he seeks to stow away?

Mr. BELL.—He would be penalized at the other end of his journey.

Mr. CHARLTON.—That would be his risk, and if he cared to take it, why not let him?

Mr. GIBSON.—Would it not be his risk at both ends?

Mr. CHARLTON.—Is it a fair thing to ask him to take such risks at this end? What harm is such a person doing us in seeking to leave Australia?

Mr. GIBSON.—The penalty is not £100, but "not exceeding £100."

Mr. CHARLTON.—If the honorable member were about to travel with a wife and somewhat numerous family, would he enjoy being put to the trouble and expense of securing passports for each individual in his party? This is a piece of drastic and entirely unwarrantable legislation. I have never heard of legislation being introduced to hinder the departure of people from a country, as it is usually to prevent undesirable persons coming in. If the Minister gives consideration to the penalty to be imposed he will see that it is altogether unreasonable, and the amendment of the honorable member for Batman (Mr. Brennan) to reduce the amount to £1 is one that I shall support.

Mr. POYNTON (Grey—Minister for Home and Territories) [10.11].—If the honorable member for Batman (Mr. Brennan) will withdraw his amendment, I am prepared to amend the clause by inserting the words "not exceeding" before "One hundred pounds."

Mr. BRENNAN.—The Acts Interpretation Act already provides that.

Question—That the words proposed to be omitted stand part of the clause—put. The Committee divided.

Ayes	26
Noes	7

Majority	19
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AYES.

Atkinson, L.	Jackson, D. S.
Bell, G. J.	Lister, J. H.
Cameron, D. C.	Mackay, G. H.
Cook, Sir Joseph	Marks, W. M.
Cook, Robert	Marr, C. W. C.
Corser, E. B. C.	Page, Dr. Earle
Foster, Richard	Poynton, A.
Francis, F. H.	Smith, Laird
Gibson, W. G.	Wienholt, A.
Greene, W. M.	Wise, G. H.
Gregory, H.	
Higgs, W. G.	
Hill, W. C.	
Hughes, W. M.	

Tellers:

Burchell, R. J.
Story, W. H.

NOES.

Blakeley, A.	Tudor, F. G.
Brennan, F.	Tellers:
Gabb, J. M.	Charlton, M.
Mathews, J.	Riley, E.

PAIRS.

Watt, W. A.	Anstey, F.
Bayley, J. G.	West, J. E.
Fowler, J. M.	Fenton, J. E.
Bowden, E. K.	Catts, J. H.
Livingston, J.	Cunningham, L. L.
Best, Sir Robert	Maloney, Dr.
Groom, L. E.	Mahon, H.
Rodgers, A. S.	Makin, N. J. O.
Ryrie, Sir Granville	Mahony, W. G.
Piowse, J. H.	Ryan, T. J.
Bruce, S. M.	Moloney, Parker
Bamford, F. W.	Lazzarini, H. P.
Chapman, Austin	Watkins, D.
Jowett, E.	Page, James
Lamond, Hector	Nicholls, S. R.
Blundell, E. P.	Lavelle, T. J.
Hay, A.	McGrath, D. C.
Maxwell, G. A.	McDonald, C.

Question so resolved in the affirmative. Amendment negatived.

Mr. GREGORY (Dampier) [10.18].—As the penalty provided in the clause is somewhat severe, I would like to know whether the Minister is prepared to accept an amendment providing that the maximum penalty shall be £50, or imprisonment for three months.

The **CHAIRMAN** (Hon. J. M. Chanter).—The Minister has no power to move in that direction, as the Committee has already decided that the penalty at present provided shall stand.

Clause agreed to.

Clause 4 agreed to.

Progress reported.

House adjourned at 10.22 p.m.

Members of the House of Representatives.

Speaker—The Honorable Sir Elliot Johnson, K.C.M.G.

Chairman of Committees—The Honorable John Moore Chanter.

Instey, Frank ..	Bourke (V.)	Jackson, David Sydney ..	Bass (T.)
Atkinson, Llewelyn ..	Wilmot (T.)	Johnson, Hon. Sir Elliot, Lang, (N.S.W.)	K.C.M.G.
Bamford, Hon. Frederick ..	Herbert (Q.)	Jowett, Edmund ..	Grampians (V.)
William ..		⁵ Kerby, Edwin ..	Thomas Ballarat (V.)
Bayley, James Garfield ..	Oxley (Q.)	John ..	
Bell, George John, C.M.G., ..	Darwin (T.)	Lamond, Hector ..	Illawarra (N.S.W.)
D.S.O.		Lavelle, Thomas James ..	Calare (N.S.W.)
Best, Hon. Sir Robert ..	Kooyong (V.)	Lazzarini, Hubert Peter ..	Werriwa (N.S.W.)
Wallace, K.C.M.G.		Lister, John Henry ..	Corio (V.)
Blakeley, Arthur ..	Darling (N.S.W.)	Livingston, John ..	Barker (S.A.)
Blundell, Hon. Reginald ..	Adelaide (S.A.)	Mackay, George Hugh ..	Lilley (Q.)
Pole ..		Mahon, Hon. Hugh ..	Kalgoorlie (W.A.)
Bowden, Eric Kendall ..	Nepean (N.S.W.)	Mahony, William George ..	Dalley (N.S.W.)
Brennan, Frank ..	Batman (V.)	Makin, Norman ..	Hindmarsh (S.A.)
Bruce, Stanley Melbourne, ..	Flinders (V.)	Oswald ..	
M.C.		Maloney, William ..	Melbourne (V.)
Burchell, Reginald John, ..	Fremantle (W.A.)	Marks, Walter Moffitt ..	Wentworth (N.S.W.)
M.C.		Marr, Charles William ..	Parke (N.S.W.)
Cameron, Donald Charles, ..	Brisbane (Q.)	Clanan, D.S.O., M.C. ..	
C.M.G., D.S.O.		Mathews, James ..	Melbourne Ports (V.)
Catts, James Howard ..	Cook (N.S.W.)	Maxwell, George Arnot ..	Fawkner (V.)
Chanter, Hon. John ..	Riverina (N.S.W.)	¹ McDonald, Hon. Charles ..	Kennedy (Q.)
Moore ..		⁶ McGrath, David Charles ..	Ballarat (V.)
Chapman, Hon. Austin ..	Eden-Monaro ..	McWilliams, William James ..	Franklin (T.)
	(N.S.W.)	Moloney, Parker John ..	Hume (N.S.W.)
³ Charlton, Matthew ..	Hunter (N.S.W.)	Nicholls, Samuel Robert ..	Macquarie (N.S.W.)
⁴ Considine, Michael Patrick ..	Barrier (N.S.W.)	Page, Earle Christmas ..	Cowper (N.S.W.)
Cook, Right Hon. Sir ..	Parramatta (N.S.W.)	Grafton ..	
Joseph, P.C., G.C.M.G.		Page, Hon. James ..	Maranoa (Q.)
Cook, Robert ..	Indi (V.)	Poynton, Hon. Alexander, ..	Grey (S.A.)
Corser, Edward Bernard ..	Wide Bay (Q.)	O.B.E.	
Cresset ..		Prowse, John Henry ..	Swan (W.A.)
Cunningham, ..	Lucien Gwydir (N.S.W.)	Riley, Edward ..	South Sydney ..
Lawrence ..			(N.S.W.)
Fenton, James Edward ..	Maribyrnong (V.)	Rodgers, Hon. Arthur Stan- ..	Wannon (V.)
³ Fleming, William Mont- ..	Robertson (N.S.W.)	islaus ..	
gomerie ..		Ryan, Hon. Thomas ..	West Sydney ..
Foster, Hon. Richard ..	Wakefield (S.A.)	Joseph, K.C. ..	(N.S.W.)
Witty ..		Ryrie, Sir Granville de ..	North Sydney ..
² Fowler, Hon. James ..	Perth (W.A.)	Launce, K.C.M.G., C.B. ..	(N.S.W.)
Mackinnon ..		Smith, Hon. William ..	Denison (T.)
Francois, Frederick Henry ..	Henty (V.)	Henry Laird ..	
Gabb, Joel Moses ..	Angas (S.A.)	Stewart, Percy Gerald ..	Wimmera (V.)
Gibson, William ..	Gerrard Corangamite (V.)	Story, William Harrison ..	Boothby (S.A.)
Greene, Hon. Walter ..	Richmond (N.S.W.)	Tudor, Hon. Frank Gwynne ..	Yarra (V.)
Massy ..		³ Watkins, Hon. David ..	Newcastle (N.S.W.)
Gregory, Hon. Henry ..	Dampier (W.A.)	Watt, Right Hon. William ..	Balaclava (V.)
Groom, Hon. Littleton ..	Darling Downs (Q.)	Alexander, P.C. ..	
Ernest ..		West, John Edward ..	East Sydney ..
Hay, Alexander ..	New England ..		(N.S.W.)
	(N.S.W.)	Wienholt, Arnold ..	Moreton (Q.)
Higgs, Hon. William Guy ..	Capricornia (Q.)	Wise, Hon. George Henry ..	Gippsland (V.)
Hill, William Caldwell ..	Echuca (V.)		
Hughes, Right Hon. William ..	Bendigo (V.)		
Morris, P.C., K.C.			

1. Sworn 27th February, 1920.—2. Sworn 3rd March, 1920.—3. Appointed Temporary Chairman of Committees, 4th March, 1920.—4. Made affirmation, 5th March, 1920.—5. Election declared void, 2nd June, 1920.
 —† Sworn 11th May, 1920.—6. Elected 10th July, 1920. Sworn 21st July, 1920.
 7. Appointed Temporary Chairman of Committees, 13th May, 1920.

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